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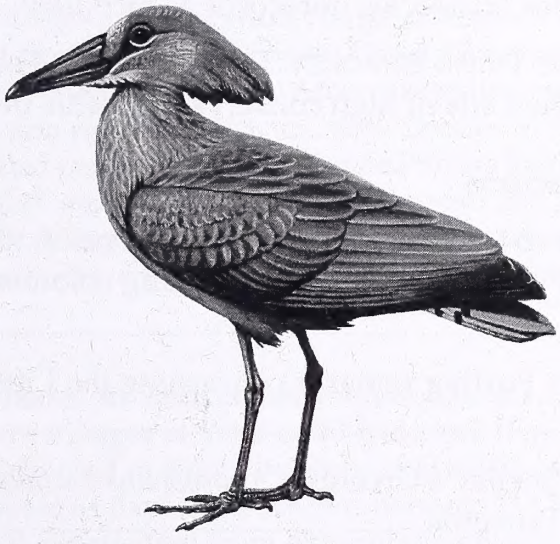

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A publication of the
Bird Committee of the
East Africa Natural History Society

Edited by
Darcy Ogada
David Pearson

Volume 33, January 2014

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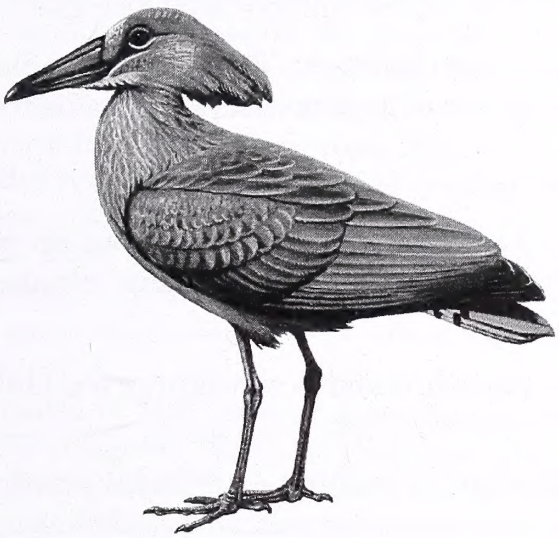

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Checklist of the birds of Kipini Conservancy, Lamu and Tana River districts, coastal Kenya

Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire and Robert J. Dowsett

Summary

During a holiday in Kenya we were invited to visit the Kipini Conservancy, just north of the Tana River. We encountered a number of birds of interest in this little-known area, particularly noteworthy being Black-and-white Flycatcher *Bias musicus*, the first sighting on the Kenya coast for many years. Range extensions included two species previously unrecorded north of Sokoke Forest: Green Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus simplex* and Pallid Honeyguide *Indicator meliphilus*. Among breeding records was the first of African Crake *Crex egregia* from the Kenyan coast. Species of conservation concern present at Kipini included resident Southern Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus fasciolatus* and Malindi Pipit *Anthus melindae* (the latter numerous), and migrant Madagascar Pond Heron *Ardeola idae*. Many pairs of the regionally threatened Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis* were among waterbirds present in the area.

Introduction

Kipini Conservancy, created in 2006, covered approximately 250 km², between the Tana River delta and the villages of Witu and Mpeketoni (Fig. 1). During a holiday visit to Kenya we were invited to Kipini by Richard Hartley, who was then running the Conservancy. We spent 64 days in the reserve, between 11 October and 26 December 2006. Heavy rainfall experienced from November onwards somewhat restricted exploration of the area. We present here details of the birds we saw in an area whose avifauna has been insufficiently studied. Except for comparison we have not detailed the observations made by visitors to the Tana River delta area, outside the Kipini Conservancy limits.

In 2006 the south-western boundary of the Conservancy stopped 1–2 km east of Kipini town (thus did not reach the river), and the north-western and north-eastern boundaries abutted onto Witu Forest Reserve and the southern bank of Lake Kenyatta respectively. On the seafront it was bordered by *c.* 20 km of pristine sand beaches.

The area visited

The main habitats were live dunes, coastal thickets, seasonally flooded grassland and pans in large depressions ("*ziwas*"), wooded grassland, thicket-clump savanna and semi-evergreen rain forest. A large part of Kipini Conservancy included the "Nairobi Ranch". This consisted of a small herd of cattle (about 130 head) mixing with Burchell's Zebras *Equus burchelli* and other wild mammals. The vegetation of the future Kipini Conservancy was the subject of some investigations, mainly by Ann Robertson and Quentin Luke in November 1988. Results were published in a report on the vegetation of coastal forests of Kenya (Robertson & Luke 1993). The authors referred to the area under "Ras Tenewi National Coastal Zone".

Overall we spent more time in the coastal zone (Sandamuke, Baharini, Ziwa Lamuu) than in the north-west (one visit to the forests of Witu Extension and Luimshi, 30 October–3 November). The one important site we did not visit was the large forest gallery at Kangawati. Witu Forest (then outside the Conservancy) was not visited.

The short rains were considerable in 2006. Occasional showers in October (some heavy), a downpour on 5 November and on later dates in that month, led to increased flooding of pans. More rain still fell in December, daily around the middle of the month. By mid-December there was very extensive flooding of *ziwa* grassland in the south; whereas the north-eastern section (Baharini) was getting drier.

Habitat types with their dominant bird species

Eight main habitat categories can be recognized in the Conservancy, progressing from the coast to the interior. Tree nomenclature follows Beentje (1994).

Sand beaches

The seafront of the reserve was about 20 km long, the Ras Shaka point being on the southern boundary. Most of this consisted of pristine sand beaches and small portions of coral cliffs (at Ras Shaka and Seven Sisters). But the beaches were largely covered at high tide and, as a result, did not harbour large populations of waders.

Live dune thickets

Live dunes are raised above the level of the beach by several metres and form a band several dozen metres in width (often *c.* 50–60 m), rising and then descending towards the plain inland. The wall of sand facing the beach has been receding slowly with the rise in sea level and trees have been falling off the edge.

Live dunes were covered with dense thickets, 2–3 m high. These were often impenetrable, although in places they were interrupted by patches of bare sand, especially on the steeper slopes. Some of the shrubs present have spines. The most characteristic and frequent woody plants in the area of K4 (Fig. 1) were *Cordia somaliensis, Haplocoelum inoploeum, Salvadora persica* (a variant with round leaves, *cyclophylla), Syderoxylon inerme, Tarenna trichantha* and *Uvaria denhardtiana* (semi-scandent).

Bird-wise, this habitat was rather species-poor, but one sunbird (Variable Sunbird: for scientific names, see systematic list) was found nowhere else in the area, and two bush shrikes (Brown-headed Tchagra, Slate-coloured Boubou) were more common here than inland. Zanzibar Greenbul, Northern Brownbul, Scaly Babbler and Grey and Collared Sunbirds were also very common.

Coastal thickets

This was a very extensive formation of the reserve, covering then at least 40 km² (from the southern boundary road near Ras Shaka, north-east to Buffalo camp in Baharini). They formed a massive block 4 to 5 km wide in the southern section, narrower in the north-east. This block came close to the seafront in the south, but elsewhere was separated from the dunes by a large *ziwa* at least 1 km wide (Fig. 1). The south-western corner (as shown on the map, Fig. 1) was in the process of being destroyed by illegal settlers.

The height of the canopy was usually 5–6 m, and there was a scattering of taller trees emerging to 10–12 m, rarely more (15 m). Nearer the coast, the height of the can-

opy decreased slightly to 3–4 m. The two main emergents were doum palms *Hyphaene compressa* and baobabs *Adansonia digitata*; other emergents were *Terminalia spinosa, Lonchocarpus bussei* and more rarely *Tamarindus indica*. The *Terminalia* and *Lonchocarpus* could also be part of the canopy. The most numerous canopy species were by far *Lecaniodiscus fraxinifolius* and *Carpodiptera africana*. *Lecaniodiscus* was more common in dense thicket whereas *Carpodiptera* is more light-demanding, thus more frequent in slight gaps and generally on edges. Locally in the thickets there were depressions of black soil that became water-logged in the rains; they have a completely different vegetation, being dominated by one tree, *Spirostachys venenifera, c.* 10–12 m tall.

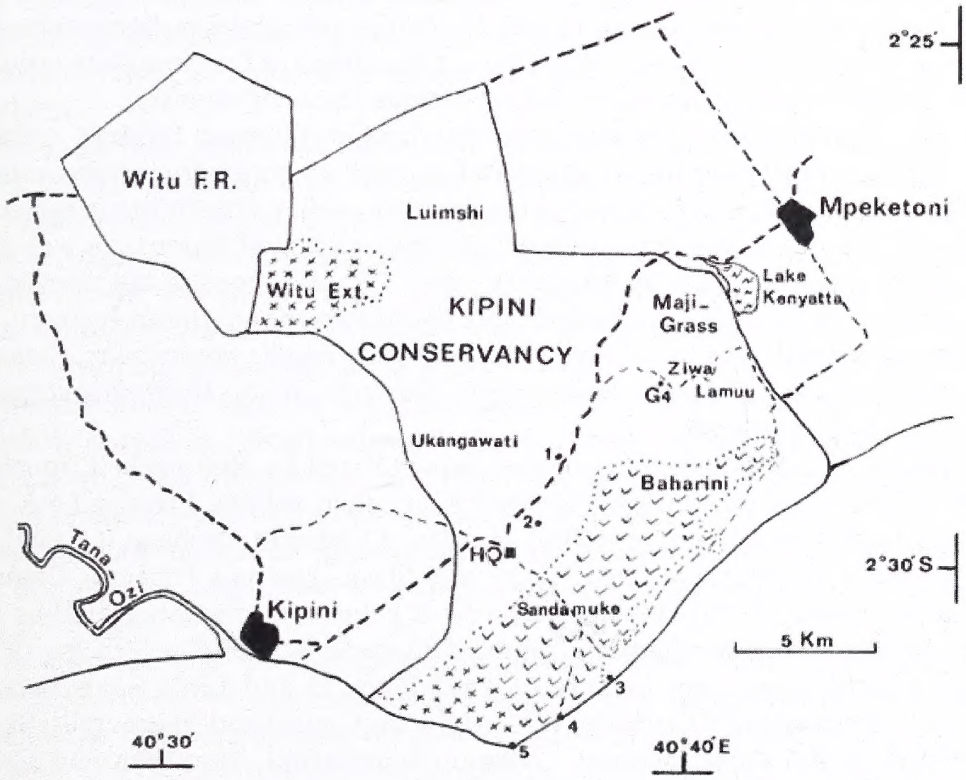

Figure 1. Map of Kipini Conservancy. Dashed lines are roads or tracks. Crosses indicate main areas of deforestation by illegal settlers; v = coastal thicket. 1 = base camp; 2 = new camp; 3 = K4 (southern end of coastal *ziwa*); 4 = Seven Sisters; 5 = Ras Shaka; G4 = cattle post; HQ = headquarters.

These thickets had a bird-life which was fairly rich. They held important populations of Crested Guineafowl, and other characteristic species included African Goshawk, Tambourine and Emerald-spotted Wood Doves, Thick-billed Cuckoo, Yellowbill, Wood Owl, Narina Trogon, Common Scimitarbill, Mangrove Kingfisher, Red-fronted Tinkerbird, Mombasa Woodpecker, Zanzibar Greenbul, Northern Brownbul, Yellow-bellied Greenbul, Eastern Nicator, Red-tailed Ant Thrush, Red-capped Robin Chat (in season), Bearded Scrub Robin, Grey-backed Camaroptera, Black-headed Batis, Little Yellow Flycatcher, African Paradise Flycatcher (in season), Scaly Babbler, Collared and Olive Sunbirds, Black-backed Puffback, Tropical Boubou, Retz's Helmetshrike, Black-bellied Starling and Dark-backed Weaver.

Thicket-clump savanna and wooded grassland

Inland of coastal thickets, the dominant vegetation was a mosaic of grassy depressions (*ziwas*) surrounded by clumps of thicket or forest on ridges, and a more open type of wooded grassland on level, dry ground. It is likely that some of the grassland on dry ground is fire-derived, as there were many signs of fire-damaged trees, or relict burnt stumps and in places the grassland was colonized by saplings of *Hyphaene* palms almost to the exclusion of anything else. Grasses belong to many genera, including *Panicum, Hyparrhenia* and *Digitaria*. In the more open types of wooded grassland, the grass *Dactyloctenium geminatum* became dominant among low saplings of *Hyphaene* spp. The small Rubiaceae *Agathisanthemum bojeri* (40–80 cm tall) was locally dominant in the drier sections of open grassland (with *Dactyloctenium* grasses), being especially conspicuous between Baharini and Maji-Grass. Many forbs of Leguminosae occurred (*Indigofera, Sesbania, Cassia*), especially the gregarious *Cassia mimosoides*.

The doum palm *Hyphaene compressa* was the most widespread tall tree, reaching 20–25 m. It grew in isolation in dry grassland, as well as an emergent above forest clumps. This graceful, much-branched palm is or was perhaps the most characteristic tree of Kipini. The other *Hyphaene* present, the thick-stemmed *H. coriacea* was more local, on wetter ground on the upper rim of *ziwas*. Other important tall trees in dry grassland and forest clumps were baobab and *Trichilia emetica* (latter evergreen). The most widespread small trees in wooded grassland were *Antidesma venosum, Catunaregam* (*Xeromphis*) *nilotica, Dalbergia melanoxylon, Flacourtia indica, Harrisonia abyssinica* and *Strychnos madagascariensis*.

The avifauna of wooded grassland was characterized by Red-necked Spurfowl, Ring-necked Dove and other doves, Striped Kingfisher, rollers, Flappet Lark, Yellow-throated Longclaw, Common Bulbul, species of Cisticola warblers (Coastal and Siffling), Tawny-flanked Prinia, Pale Flycatcher, Black-crowned Tchagra, Common Drongo and a couple of canaries. Large birds of extensive grassland such as bustards seem to be missing completely. The most characteristic birds of thicket or forest clumps around base camp included Lizard Buzzard and Little Sparrowhawk, Thick-billed and Levaillant's Cuckoos, White-browed Coucal and Yellowbills, Speckled Mousebird, Violet Wood-hoopoe, Common Scimitarbill, Mombasa and Green-backed Woodpeckers, Trumpeter and Crowned Hornbills, Northern Brownbul and Scaly Babbler (often together), Yellow-bellied Greenbul and Zanzibar Greenbul, Red-capped Robin Chat, Bearded Scrub Robin, Collared and Amethyst Sunbirds, Black-backed Puffback, Retz's Helmetshrike, Black-bellied Starling and Dark-backed Weaver. In the larger clumps, forest species such as Fischer's Turaco, Eastern Nicator, Red-tailed Ant Thrush and Little Yellow Flycatcher may occur.

Acacia zanzibarica woodland

In the north-east of the reserve, on dry sand, patches of a special type of *Acacia* woodland occurred. The most extensive stands were between Kenyatta camp and Ziwa Lamuu, but did not cover more than a few hectares. This woodland was 8–10 m tall and was dominated by the whistling thorn *Acacia zanzibarica*. Other characteristic trees were *Acacia nilotica, Dichrostachys cinerea, Dobera loranthifolia* and baobabs. These patches intermingle with small thickets, under tall *Hyphaene coriacea, H. compressa* and *Tamarindus indica*, with *Combretum constrictum, Dalbergia melanoxylon, Garcinia livingstonei, Thespesia danis*, etc.

This was the only true woodland in the reserve, but it was not extensive enough

to have a typical woodland avifauna, which is lacking. This was the only place where we found Spotted Flycatcher (a Palaearctic migrant); Black-headed Batis (otherwise only in coastal thicket) was present, and the Northern Crombec was more common in this habitat than in wooded grassland.

"Ziwas" or seasonally flooded grasslands

These varied in size from anything to several square kilometres. They were scattered almost throughout the reserve, from just behind the dunes (area referred to as "coastal *ziwa*" below) to the Luimshi area in the north. The *ziwa*s in the north-east sector were drier, being on sand, while those in the north were much wetter. They differ from "*dambos*", another type of seasonally flooded grassland (White 1983), by the nature of the soil (sand as opposed to peat) and the structure of the grassland, which is much less compact. Indeed, there are often bare patches of sand or mud among the grassland.

The outer rims and drier sections of *ziwa*s are dominated by the grass *Dactyloctenium geminatum* (often with *Digitaria milanjana*) and patches of the subshrub *Cassia mimosoides* (often 1–1.5 m tall). At slightly lower levels where a few centimetres of water can stand, *Hibiscus cannabinus* is very common. The central depression can hold water for many months, and pans of this nature are usually covered in Nile Cabbage (*Pistia stratiotes*); water lilies *Nymphaea* occur in the deeper ponds, next to open water. In November–December flood levels slowly increased and vast areas of flooded grassland started to form. A key grass species in the big coastal *ziwa* was *Echinochloa haploclada*, as well as a small sedge (*Eleocharis*), both covering many hectares in a vivid green swathe. Tall *Cyperus* spp. and other sedges also occur. The palm *Hyphaene coriacea* was often found at the ecotone, on the edge of a *ziwa* or a pan, as well as small clumps of *Lawsonia inermis* (conspicuous at the southern end of the coastal *ziwa*). The edge of the pan at Maji-Grass was ringed with a strip of Ambatch (*Aeschynomene cristata*), *c.* 2 m tall.

The bird life was very characteristic: Hadada Ibis, Woolly-necked and Saddle-billed Storks were very widespread, and the wet grasslands were important refugia for large numbers of Spur-winged Geese, with smaller ones of Egyptian Geese. Few other ducks occurred, African Spoonbills, herons and egrets were mostly visitors from the Tana delta. African Crakes were common before the heavy floods. African Jacanas invaded the pans in November to breed, while the floods pushed out the Spur-winged Plovers to the drier, sandy *ziwa*s. Small mud pans in the coastal *ziwa* attracted moderate numbers of Palaearctic waders. At the peak of flooding in December, large numbers of Lesser Moorhens appeared, and other crakes might be expected to occur. Yellow-throated Longclaws and Coastal Cisticolas bred in moderately wet *ziwa*s, whereas the numerous Malindi Pipits preferred the dry sections. The floods forced them to concentrate in dry areas, often in large flocks. Zanzibar Red Bishops bred in moderate numbers in the wettest *ziwa*s, which were also invaded by Lesser Swamp Warblers near the coast.

Permanent wetland (Lake Kenyatta)

On the northern boundary of the reserve, this permanent lake collects water from an extensive catchment area. It was nearly 3 km long, and the greatest width was *c.* 1 km. Its margins had a ring of tall aquatic vegetation, more developed on the northern side (near Mpeketoni village) than the south-western side. Reedbeds of *Typha* bulrushes occurred, but a tall rufous sedge *Cyperus* sp. was more widespread.

In 2006 the lake was the only wetland where a few Pink-backed Pelicans still occurred. Small muddy beaches were suitable for Egyptian Geese and a few waders. The passerine avifauna appeared rather impoverished, but it was the only site where we observed the Eastern Golden Weaver.

Semi-evergreen (or semi-deciduous) rain forest

The most extensive area of forest was in the continuation of Witu Forest and probably covered at least 15 km². Other important forest patches occurred in broad galleries in the area of Luimshi in the north and Kangawati in the centre. By the end of October when we visited, most of the Witu Extension had been cleared by settlers. We explored a fragment of forest a few hectares in extent.

This forest had a closed canopy *c.* 25–30 m tall, with emergents reaching 40 m in height. The main emergent was *Milicia excelsa*, and it was still very common in other, more damaged fragments; others were *Diospyros mespiliformis*, *Parkia filicoidea* and *Sterculia appendiculata*. Common canopy trees were *Diospyros abyssinica*, *Erythrophleum suaveolens*, *Hyphaene compressa* and *Trichilia emetica*. At Luimshi some patches were also being cleared by illegal settlers. Here *Hyphaene compressa* and *Trichilia emetica* were dominant; strangling *Ficus scassellatii* was also found.

Much closer to the coast, some tall forest occurred very locally within the Sandamuke thickets, on old dunes. To the east of "new camp" the forest was quite tall (20–22 m), and a gallery *c.* 1 km long winded in a south-westerly direction until a small hill where the canopy decreased to 15–18 m; from this point, the forest merged gradually into thicket, with decreasing height and a change of composition. *Carpodiptera* and *Cassipourea euryoides* were dominant in the canopy on the hill. In the first kilometre or so of tall forest, *Combretum schumannii* (20–25 m tall) occurred in clumps of 3–4 trees. The woody flora here was a mixture of forest and thicket elements, with *Trichilia emetica* as a dominant canopy species.

The avifauna in Witu Extension and Luimshi resembled that of forest clumps to the south, but was more species-rich. Five bird species were not found anywhere else in the reserve: Green Wood-hoopoe (Witu Extension only, not even in Luimshi), Fischer's Greenbul, Black-headed Apalis, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher and Square-tailed Drongo. It is possible some of these would have been found in Kangawati forest, unfortunately not visited. A forest raptor, the Southern Banded Snake Eagle, reached the coastal thickets in very small numbers but must have occurred in higher densities in the optimal habitat of Witu Extension and Luimshi. It took us weeks to locate one displaying bird in Sandamuke whereas we found it easily in both Witu Extension and Luimshi on our short visit. The Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird was very common in Witu, whereas to the south we found some territorial birds only in the old dune forest near new camp; our other records at base camp and in coastal thickets were only of wanderers.

Annotated list of bird species recorded in the Kipini area

All species were observed by us, except for some reported in the literature or by other observers (indicated by *). Some additional extralimital, or doubtful reports are placed in square brackets. Nomenclature and sequence follows EANHS (2009), except for a few factual corrections.

Crested Guineafowl *Guttera pucherani*

Common in coastal thickets (Sandamuke-Baharini) as well as in Witu Extension. Up

to 12 seen in former, and once two birds were feeding amid a group of baboons *Papio* sp.

Crested Francolin *Francolinus sephaena*
Common in thicket clumps and edge of coastal thickets. Calls much after rain. Two small chicks 11 December would be from eggs laid in November.

Red-necked Spurfowl *Francolinus afer*
Numerous throughout; often sings high up in tall *Hyphaene compressa*. Enters coastal forest or thicket. Two tiny chicks 18 November and three small chicks 5 December, would be from eggs laid October and November respectively. Had bred earlier, as several broods with large juveniles seen in October.

Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei*
Intra-African migrant, with one in Baharini grassland, 16 November.

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*
First noted 22 October (new camp) with increasing flooding. Small flocks on the move often visited pan at base camp, where chased by Egyptian Geese. More frequent November–December, up to 20 or more in coastal *ziwa* after full November flood.

Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*
Common, especially short-grass *ziwa*s near G4, and coastal *ziwa* (dozens at each place). Some pairs clearly breeding late November–December, very wary (e.g. one sitting and male guarding, pan near Kenyatta camp).

Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*
One male on passage 12 October. A few present coastal *ziwa* from 5 November and likely breeding there, but difficult to see and very discreet.

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*
Common edge of pans with some dry mud. Numerous at Lake Kenyatta in November–December (over 100 at far end). Had to leave some *ziwa*s after flooding increased in December (as at base camp). Some goslings in coastal *ziwa* 5 November.

African Pygmy Goose *Nettapus auritus*
Local: a few pairs in *ziwa*s with extensive flooded grassland and patches of water lilies. At least two pairs Luimshi pan (2 November). Present in coastal *ziwa* from at least 1 December, several pairs on 12 December. One or two pairs edges of Lake Kenyatta November.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*
Occasional visitor? One pair in one of the Baharini pans on 11 December.

Garganey *Anas querquedula
Palaearctic migrant, a specimen was collected at Kipini on 14 March (Stager 1973).

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*
One in a pool in front of new camp, 9 November for about a week.

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus
R. Hartley reported small numbers (up to 15) flying south at dusk along beach, when camping at Seven Sisters, July and September.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*
Common, often up to 4–6 birds in a loose group—in any *ziwa*, favouring short flooded grassland. Not apparently territorial (come and go at base camp, can be absent on some days), and no sign of breeding. A reported sighting of "several hundred soaring above the Tana River" in the Ishaqbini Conservancy (Njoroge *et al.* 2008) seems astonishing.

Saddle-billed Stork *Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*
Common and very widespread, always in pairs—strongly territorial, unlike previous species. The absence of immatures suggests no breeding took place in recent years. Pair at base camp growing more excited with increasing rain in December. Likely to breed in years of heavy floods.

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumeniferus*
Only a visitor from outside, scavenging with vultures: one flying towards G4 on 15 November (see Vultures below).

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*
Some large flocks flying over in October (e.g. over 100 on 19 October), to the south-west at dusk. Small groups feeding locally (*ziwa* of new camp, Luimshi), last seen 12 November.

Hadada Ibis *Bostrychia hagedash*
Very common throughout, all *ziwa*s. Often 3–5 together, up to 20 or so in local concentrations.

[Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*
A roost estimated to number 10 000 at the Tana River delta, 30 March 2009, and 2000 reported at Kipini, April 2011 (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2009, 16: 232; 2011, 18: 234).]

African Spoonbill *Platalea alba*
A few visiting pans late October–early November: first on 27 October, several localities November, including 5 in coastal *ziwa* 11 November, 6 at base camp 13 November, last date of the season.

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus
Collected at Witu 12 May, and identified as the Palaearctic nominate race by R.B. Sharpe (Jackson 1898: 141).

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii*
One by pool on the road near G4, 26 December. Intra-African migrant arriving with heavy rains.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*
One edge of flooded *Spirostachys* forest bordering *ziwa* (K4) on 25 November.

Squacco Heron ***Ardeola ralloides***
Widespread in pans in October, up to 6 at base camp, more at Luimshi (on 1–2 November, including some with blue bill of breeding plumage). Then numbers dropped steadily, only 1 at Luimshi on 13 November, 2 at Maji-Grass on 15, last one there on 16. None seen for *c.* a month, one at Maji-Grass 13 December.

Madagascar Pond Heron ***Ardeola idae***
Malagasy migrant (Globally Endangered), with wintering ending in October: at least 2 present on pan at base camp 21 October (next to Squacco Heron), 1 on 22 October.

Cattle Egret ***Bubulcus ibis***
In fluctuating numbers, feeding in semi-flooded grassland or with African Buffaloes *Syncerus caffer*. In October flocks of dozens at dusk flying west, few feeding locally. More feeding in wet *ziwa*s in early November, still leaving at dusk for roosts to the west. None late November–early December, suddenly back in mid-December: 1st on 16 December (Baharini pan), then dozens in various areas from the 17th, and up to 400 (in two flocks) flying at dusk on 18 December.

Black-headed Heron ***Ardea melanocephala***
Particularly common in short grassland of *ziwa*s, Ziwa Lamuu and Maji-Grass (up to 12 in a loose flock); the odd one elsewhere.

Goliath Heron ***Ardea goliath***
Widespread, in pairs or singles (adults/immatures) in flooded grassland: Ziwa Lamuu, base camp, Luimshi etc. Often visited for a day ot two then moved on.

Great White Egret ***Ardea alba***
Less common than last, but following the same pattern. A few in October, only one in November (18th).

Yellowbilled Egret ***Egretta intermedia***
Widespread, with a few feeding in various pans in October–November, up to 10 or more at new camp 12 November, leaving at 18:00 to fly west to roost. Almost absent in the next five weeks, except one (in breeding dress) on 24 November (base camp). Back in numbers on 25 December (40 + 9 flying east at 06:30).

Black Heron** ***Egretta ardesiaca
A vagrant, one seen by R. Hartley in a pan near headquarters in July or August 2006.

Western Reef Heron** ***Egretta gularis
There is a specimen from Witu (Jackson 1898).

Greater Frigatebird** ***Fregata minor
There is a specimen from Kipini, dated 31 August (Britton 1980).

Hamerkop ***Scopus umbretta***
Very common, throughout: pans, pools on road. Old nest in a *Trichilia emetica* at new camp.

Pink-backed Pelican ***Pelecanus rufescens***
A few at Lake Kenyatta October–November, maximum 4.

Reed Cormorant ***Phalacrocorax africanus***
A few in October–early November, flying over base camp (e.g. 3 on 19 October), at least 6 at Luimshi pan 1–2 November, a few at Lake Kenyatta on 12 November.

African Darter** ***Anhinga rufa
Occasionally present Lake Kenyatta, as reported by Ben Wachoa.

Common Kestrel ***Falco tinnunculus***
One over Ziwa Lamuu, flying north, 16 December.

Red-necked Falcon ***Falco chicquera***
One pair flying into *Hyphaene* palm near G4, 5 November.

[Amur Falcon ***Falco amurensis***
An estimated 10 000 of this Palaearctic migrant were at the Tana River delta, 7 April 2011 (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2011, 18: 234).]

Sooty Falcon ***Falco concolor***
Palaearctic migrant: one flying south 28 October.

Eurasian Hobby ***Falco subbuteo***
Palaearctic migrant: one flying south 5 November.

Lanner Falcon ***Falco biarmicus***
One flying over base camp, 3 December.

Osprey ***Pandion haliaetus***
Palaearctic migrant probably wintering at Lake Kenyatta: one fishing and eating on a dead palm, 15 December.

African Cuckoo Hawk ***Aviceda cuculoides***
Apparently a local migrant (perhaps from inland in Kenya, Zimmerman *et al.* 1996), with several seen in October, in open savanna with thicket clumps. Last on 24 October.

European Honey Buzzard ***Pernis apivorus***
Palaearctic migrant, uncommon: singles on 1 November, 5 December and 13 December (the last at least suggestive of local wintering in coastal thicket).

African Black-shouldered Kite ***Elanus caeruleus***
Rare: one over Ziwa Lamuu 1 December. Habitat very suitable, but perhaps too poor in rodents.

Black (Yellow-billed) Kite ***Milvus migrans parasitus***
Rare: one over Baharini thicket 9 December is the only record. Also rare outside the area, as only one seen at Mpeketoni (29 November) and none Witu-Garsen area!

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*
Common visitor to pans, also scavenging in grassland. Usually as singles, but vocal pairs at Luimshi and at Lake Kenyatta, where likely breeds.

White-backed Vulture *Gyps africanus*
Considered Globally Endangered. Up to 13 at Maji-Grass on 15–16 November, with full crops (carrion not located). Some were flying in that direction on 14 November (over base camp). Four circling over Ziwa Lamuu on 13 December. Evidently a visitor from outside.

White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceps occipitalis*
This Globally Vulnerable species is probably a scarce resident. A pair over Ziwa Lamuu November–December. On 6 December one came to base camp and landed at far end: it left with a full crop (a female Topi and her young watched it land and fled).

Black-chested Snake Eagle *Circaetus pectoralis*
One near Luimshi November. Seen regularly (adult and immature) in drier section of coastal *ziwa* in December. Also hunting over Ziwa Lamuu and Maji-Grass.

Brown Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinereus*
Throughout, singles or pairs; e.g. pair holding territory around base camp.

Southern Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus fasciolatus*
Throughout, more tied to forest than Brown Snake Eagle. Calls high in the air as well as perched. Any forest (Witu Extension, Luimshi, bigger forest clumps near base camp), and also in coastal thickets (Sandamuke) where appears rare.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*
Very widespread, often in pairs. One subadult seen but no immatures (poor breeding performance?).

Western Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*
Palaearctic migrant. First seen (immature male) on 12 November at Lake Kenyatta. Winters in small numbers as adult male/immature male seen occasionally over coastal *ziwa* late November–December.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* or **Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus***
Palaearctic migrant: immature male (white rump, grey in wings) seen briefly over big *ziwa* before Mpeketoni on 23 November. Dived into stream gully. On the coast Pallid is reported more often (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

African Harrier Hawk *Polyboroides typus*
Common and widespread, adults and immatures. Systematically chased by drongos and rollers. On 14 December immature in moult, with tail growing (grey with black bars, as in adult), but body plumage still brown; it was chased by a Common Drongo.

African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro*
Common in coastal thickets (up to three heard simultaneously at Sandamuke) and large clumps of forest. In song October–December.

Little Sparrowhawk *Accipiter minullus*
Widespread, thicket or forest clumps, also hunting in the open. One chasing a Malindi Pipit in acrobatic flight over the grassland was probably successful (disappeared in the grass for some time).

Great Sparrowhawk *Accipiter melanoleucus*
Widespread: six observations of adult or immature. Although not mapped on the coast north of the Galana River by Zimmerman *et al.* (1996), the species has been reported further north at Kiunga (Britton 1980) and into southern Somalia (Ash & Miskell 1998).

Lizard Buzzard *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*
Commonest small raptor, especially in thicket-clump savanna. Very vocal. Hunts from tall palm or forest edges (insects, frogs etc.).

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina*
Palaearctic migrant, with a few on southward passage: three on 5 November, two on 16 November and one on 13 December.

? Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*
Palaearctic migrant (Globally Vulnerable): two large, dark brown eagles with a short tail, circling and drifting south on 18 December. Almost certainly this species, but identification remains contentious (and some hybridize with Lesser Spotted Eagle in Europe).

Wahlberg's Eagle *Aquila wahlbergi*
A few pairs present October–December, including one at base camp. Latter chased other raptors on occasions (African Hawk Eagle, Brown Snake Eagle), especially October–early November, suggestive of breeding.

African Hawk Eagle *Aquila spilogaster*
Thinly but widely distributed, from base camp to coastal *ziwa* and G4.

Ayres's Hawk Eagle *Aquila ayresii*
Seen three times over the thickets at Baharini (November–December).

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*
Singles (adult and immature) seen a few times over Ziwa Lamuu; also one west of Luimshi. Not mapped on the coast as far north as the Galana River by Zimmerman *et al.* (1996), but localities in our area were plotted by Lewis & Pomeroy (1989) and there are numerous records from Somalia.

Long-crested Eagle *Lophaetus occipitalis*
Occasionally seen in two places: near headquarters and on the northern boundary road. Also at Mpeketoni.

Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus*
Widespread, at least two pairs between base camp and the coast at Baharini. Immature also seen near the coast.

Hartlaub's Bustard *Lissotis hartlaubii
Past records from Kipini and Lamu (Fischer in Jackson & Sclater 1938).

African Crake *Crex egregia*
Intra-African migrant, common October–November in any rank grass, often crossing roads, from Luimshi to the coast. One adult with two tiny chicks on 16 November, would have laid end October; first breeding record for the coast (Zimmerman *et al.* 2001). Fewer in December, last one on the 13th.

Corncrake *Crex crex*
Palaearctic migrant, with one flushed on 10 November. Backhurst *et al.* (1973) had no coastal records and the only plot in Lewis & Pomeroy (1989) is well south of 3°S, but there is a record from the coast of southern Somalia (Ash & Miskell 1998).

Black Crake *Amaurornis flavirostra*
Only recorded at the permanent wetland of Lake Kenyatta, where apparently very uncommon.

Lesser Moorhen *Gallinula angulata*
Intra-African migrant, with sudden invasion of flooded grassland at base camp, 25–26 December. Scores arrived at night, calling everywhere. This happened about a week after the full flood. We did not have the time to check how widespread this phenomenon was.

Common Buttonquail *Turnix sylvaticus*
Regularly flushed from grassland near G4 and towards the coast (Baharini) in dense grass *c.* 30-40 cm tall (pure or with scattered shrubs/palms); also on the road to Ras Shaka. Not mapped on the coast as far north as the Galana River by Zimmerman *et al.* (1996), but localities in our area were plotted by Lewis & Pomeroy (1989) and there are numerous records from Somalia.

Water Thick-knee *Burhinus vermiculatus*
Rare: one by pan (K4) on 11 November; one on sand, coastal *ziwa* (K4) on 12 December.

Spotted Thick-knee *Burhinus capensis*
One pair regularly encountered on dry sand edge of coastal *ziwa* (K4), October–December.

Crab-plover *Dromas ardeola*
African or possibly Palaearctic visitor, with two on 10 November (north) and two on 5 December (Ras Shaka). Partial to beach with some low coral rocks.

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
Several pairs and immatures came in with the flood of 5 November in the coastal *ziwa* and pans. Still present on 18 November, but had left by the end of the month when the water was too deep.

Long-toed Plover *Vanellus crassirostris*
Single pairs in some of the wetter *ziwa*s, at edge of Nile Cabbage and in flooded grass-

land: Luimshi, Ziwa Lamuu and Maji-Grass. A total of 225 were counted at the Tana River delta, 5-6 February 2008 (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2008, 15: 270).

Spur-winged Plover *Vanellus spinosus*
Very widespread at pans, on sand and muddy edges, or short grass generally. Pushed out of some *ziwa*s by the floods of November or December. Concentrations of 20–30 at Maji-Grass in November, fewer in December.

Black-headed Plover *Vanellus tectus*
The occasionall pair in dry sand and very short grass in drier section of coastal *ziwa*, sheltering under trees (*Dobera*) in the hot hours.

Senegal Plover *Vanellus lugubris*
One (or a pair) heard flying near Maji-Grass 15 November. A pair edge of flooded *ziwa* (K4) 25 December. Species subject to movements.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*
Palaearctic migrant: seven birds on mud, just inland of the dunes (K4), 10 November. Three flocks totalling 182 birds were reported from the Tana River delta, 5–6 February 2008 (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2008, 15: 270).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*
Palaearctic migrant: a few on beach, October–December.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*
Palaearctic migrant: common, in small numbers, at pans and beaches (October–December).

Kittlitz's Plover *Charadrius pecuarius*
Several pairs and immatures on dry mud edge of coastal pans and Maji-Grass. Up to a dozen locally.

Three-banded Plover *Charadrius tricollaris*
Only one record, of one by a coastal pan, 11 November.

White-fronted Plover *Charadrius marginatus*
Uncommon and local: some pairs on beach (November–December), also one at coastal pan 11 November.

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*
Palaearctic migrant: a few on beach and coastal pans, November–December.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*
Palaearctic migrant: a few on beach, November–December.

[Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*
Palaearctic migrant. No fewer than 2347 were counted at the Tana River delta on 15 February 2010 (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2010, 17: 244).]

African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus*
Occasional visitor to the small pan at base camp in October, but a pair arrived on 8

November after increased flooding (5 November). At first chased by Spur-winged Plover, but came back and settled on 9 November. Built nest on Nile Cabbage, and mated from 14th. Male brooded the clutch from 17th, until 12 December (26 days). During this time, the clutch was threatened by numerous intruders, including a Marsh Mongoose *Atilax paludinosus* (who did not see it), Monitor Lizard *Varanus niloticus* (who probably took one egg), the local male Hippo *Hippopotamus amphibius* (who usually walked outside that particular area), Goliath Heron, herds of up to 500 Buffaloes. However, at least three chicks hatched successfully, usually hiding in grass, and coming in the open on Nile Cabbage only when their father visited them. Throughout that time, the female (who does not incubate) often appeared near the nest in case of danger (Buffaloes, herons, etc.), and helped the male chase the Monitor Lizard. The male also covered the chicks during rain (e.g. 25 December). By mid-December the male built another nest in the middle of the pan, and mating was seen on 24–26 December.

The species invaded all pans of suitable size in Kipini after the flood of 5 November. Some are probably resident at permanent wetlands such as Lake Kenyatta and (near-permanent) Luimshi pan.

African Snipe *Gallinago nigripennis
Seen at Witu by Britton (1980).

Great Snipe *Gallinago media*
Palaeartic migrant, with one flushed from rank grass (Baharini) on 4 December.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*
Palaearctic migrant: a few wintering in muddy patches with grass. Widespread but especially common at Maji-Grass. First noted 15 November.

[Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
Palaearctic migrant, reported at the Tana River delta, August 2010 (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2011, 18: 99).]

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*
Palaearctic migrant: few on beach, November–December.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*
Palaearctic migrant: singles on beach, November–December.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*
Palaearctic migrant: fairly common in shallow water of several coastal pans, from 11 November.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*
Palaearctic migrant. At several pans, especially common in flooded grassland of coastal *ziwa*, from 5 November (day of first big flood).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*
Palaearctic migrant: more local, at pans, edge of flooded grassland, from 22 October. More in November, still noted mid-December.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*
Palaearctic migrant: the most widespread wader, at any pan and shallow flooded grassland, from 4 October–26 December (wintering).

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*
Palaearctic migrant: several on the beach November–December (over 25 near Ras Shaka 5 December).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*
Palaearctic migrant: especially common at Maji-Grass, edge of Nile Cabbage, with over 20 (November–December). Otherwise a few on the beach (October–December), edges of Lake Kenyatta.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*
Palaearctic migrant: a few on the beach and low coral rock, November–December.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*
Palaearctic migrant: widespread on the beach, October–December.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*
Palaearctic migrant: small numbers on muddy edge of coastal pans 13–17 December, max. 15.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*
Palaearctic migrant: one wintering at Maji-Grass, seen nearly all visits from 4–25 December; also one in coastal pan, 16 December.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*
Palaearctic migrant: one with Little Stints at coastal pan, 17 December.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*
Palaearctic migrant: one on sandy beach, 10 November.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*
Palaearctic migrant: small numbers winter in short flooded grassland almost throughout, from coast to Lake Kenyatta and inland (Maji-Grass to new camp etc.). From 9 November.

Bronze-winged Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus*
Intra-African migrant: one on the main road, 15 December.

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*
A pair with independent immature on dry mud edge of Maji-Grass, November–December. Probably a local breeder; Valle (2005) reported the first evidence of breeding on the Kenya coast, at the Sabaki River mouth.

[**Madagascar Pratincole *Glareola ocularis***
Globally Vulnerable. Some 3000 were at the Tana River delta in August 2010, and 2000 on 10 April 2011 (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2011, 18: 99, 234).]

Sooty Gull ***Larus hemprichii***
Occasionally seen along shore from the dunes; dozens resting at Ras Shaka on 5 December.

Lesser Black-backed Gull ***Larus fuscus***
Palaearctic migrant (form *heuglini*): six adults and one immature flying south at Seven Sisters on 20 October (high tide).

Gull-billed Tern ***Gelochelidon nilotica***
Palaearctic migrant: common in October–early November, feeding on crabs in free water of the larger pans (Lake Kenyatta, Luimshi, Ziwa Lamuu, Maji-Grass, coastal *ziwa*). Numbers suddenly decreasing in November, with last seen on 16.

Lesser Crested Tern ***Sterna bengalensis***
Possibly seen over sea in November (from dunes). Hundreds resting on beach near Ras Shaka, 5 December. Some immatures still begging from adults.

[**Sandwich Tern** ***Sterna sandvicensis***
Palaearctic migrant, one at the Tana River delta, 6 February 2008 (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2008, 15: 270).]

Roseate Tern ***Sterna dougallii***
One on beach seen at close range, near Ras Shaka, 5 December.

Common Tern ***Sterna hirundo***
Palaearctic migrant: at least seven on the beach, 5 December.

Saunders's Tern ***Sternula saundersi***
Over 100 resting on beach, Ras Shaka, 5 December.

Whiskered Tern ***Chlidonias hybrida***
At least two, with many White-winged Terns, over Luimshi pan, 2 November.

White-winged Black Tern ***Chlidonias leucopterus***
Palaearctic migrant: over 100, in groups of 20–30, hawking insects over flooded grassland and pans at Luimshi, 1–2 November.

Lesser Noddy** ***Anous tenuirostris
At least 50 were seen off Kipini, 27 October (Britton 1980).

Red-eyed Dove ***Streptopelia semitorquata***
Common and throughout, in savanna with thickets and forest patches, canopy of coastal thicket.

Ring-necked Dove ***Streptopelia capicola***
Common, throughout savanna.

Emerald-spotted Wood Dove ***Turtur chalcospilos***
Common and throughout, including the interior of extensive coastal thickets. Nest-building observed 25 November.

Tambourine Dove ***Turtur tympanistria***
Common, throughout any thicket and forest type.

Namaqua Dove ***Oena capensis***
A wanderer, near northern boundary road, 16 November.

African Green Pigeon ***Treron calvus***
Widespread but uncommon: usually in pairs, rarely more than three together.

African Orange-bellied Parrot ***Poicephalus rufiventris***
Only one record: three flew across Lake Kenyatta from Mpeketoni, 23 October. The scarcity of parrots could be explained by the lack of fruit of baobabs in October–December, although *Terminalia spinosa* came into seed in November.

Fischer's Turaco ***Tauraco fischeri***
This Globally Near-Threatened species is widespread, with well-spaced territories in large clumps of forest (only one heard from base camp), but numerous in Witu Extension. Apparently absent from coastal thickets.

White-bellied Go-away-bird ***Corythaixoides leucogaster***
Vagrant: one pair wandering through savanna (baobabs, palms) on 28 October.

Jacobin Cuckoo** ***Clamator jacobinus
There are specimens from Kipini (*pica*, 5 August: Fischer & Reichenow 1879—this is the race breeding in East Africa), Kau and Kosi (*pica*, December, January: Percival collection) and Lamu (*serratus*, 2 October: Fischer & Reichenow 1878—this is a non-breeding migrant from southern Africa).

Levaillant's Cuckoo ***Oxylophus levaillantii***
Black form only, seen frequently (up to three in a day) in October, when seemed to be moving around. In November–December more often located by song, from 8 November, increasing in volume and frequency (base camp) until late November. Called more sporadically in December, sometimes at dusk or at night. Widespread, from the northern boundary to headquarters, in small thickets.

Thick-billed Cuckoo ***Pachycoccyx audeberti***
The most numerous cuckoo, very vocal from October to mid-November. Fewer songs later (28 November) but pair displaying 19 December and again very noisy on the 26th. From Witu Extension to coastal thickets.

Common Cuckoo ***Cuculus canorus***
Palaearctic migrant: a female hepatic phase, 16 October.

African Cuckoo** ***Cuculus gularis
A specimen was collected at Witu, 21 May (Jackson 1898).

Lesser Cuckoo ***Cuculus poliocephalus***
Palaearctic migrant: one on 24 November, of the grey phase, well seen (small and slender).

Klaas's Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx klaas*
Rare: two encountered on the move, one at Luimshi (singing 1 November, not the next two days), and one singing at base camp 8 November.

Diederik Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx caprius*
First song heard at headquarters on 12 December, and one singing at G4 on 26 December. Probably related to greater breeding activity of Golden Palm Weavers with increasing rains.

Yellowbill *Ceuthmochares aereus*
Very widespread, from coastal thickets (fairly common) to forest patches at Luimshi, and in thicket/forest clumps throughout. Vocal October–December, a frequent member of bird parties, no doubt resident.

Black Coucal *Centropus grillii*
Curiously very local, as found only at Luimshi pan in rank, moist grass (perhaps because the habitat there is almost permanent?). Breeds there, seen 30 October–2 November carrying food to nest or hidden young (eggs would have been laid September).

White-browed Coucal *Centropus superciliosus*
Common and throughout: savanna, small thickets, edge of swamps and of coastal thickets. Nest-building mid-December.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba
A specimen was collected at Witu by Jackson (1898, under the name *Strix flammea*). Zimmerman *et al.* (1996) did not map the species north of the Malindi area.

Spotted Eagle Owl *Bubo africanus*
Only one record: one flushed by road on 11 November on the northern boundary (short grass *ziwa*). Habitat in the Conservancy is largely unsuitable for this species.

Verreaux's Eagle Owl *Bubo lacteus*
Several records, including edge of thickets at Ziwa Lamuu, dry forest at base camp (singing on the opposite side, wandering occasionally into our camp) and new camp.

[Pel's Fishing Owl *Scotopelia peli*
Known from the Tana River delta (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2009, 16: 232; 2011, 18: 99), see also Campbell (1977).]

African Wood Owl *Strix woodfordii*
Common and throughout, any thicket and forest.

African Barred Owlet *Glaucidium capense*
One calling in forest clumps near base camp on 23 November did not stay.

Donaldson Smith's Nightjar *Caprimulgus donaldsoni
Two were collected at Kipini 14–15 March (Stager 1973). Also reported from Hewani (Andrews *et al.* 1975). There is no suitable habitat within the Conservancy.

[**Fiery-necked Nightjar** ***Caprimulgus pectoralis***
Reported from the Hewani area (Andrews *et al.* 1975), without details, while Njoroge *et al.* (2008) listed "Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar Caprimulgus pectoralis" (*sic*) from Ishaqbini area. In the extreme north known from Boni (Britton 1980), where two collected in February (Stager 1973) and heard in August (Britton & Britton 1973), but it remains unrecorded from Somalia (Ash & Miskell 1998).]

Plain Nightjar** ***Caprimulgus inornatus
Several were collected in the Kipini-Witu area, 13–14 March (Stager 1973).

Slender-tailed Nightjar ***Caprimulgus clarus***
Common in short grassland with sandy patches in sections of the coastal *ziwa* and at Ziwa Lamuu, many singing there in December. Also marginally present in short grass at headquarters, where seen September (Gus Ankerheilm pers. comm.), and December, singing on 4 December.

[**Gabon Nightjar** ***Caprimulgus fossii***
Specimens have been claimed from Witu (1 October, Fischer & Reichenow 1878) and Lamu (Jackson & Sclater 1938), and listed without comment from Ishaqbini (Njoroge *et al.* 2008). However, they may well have been misidentified, and Zimmerman *et al.* (1996) map the species north to Malindi only. Interestingly, there is a recent claim of one photographed on its nest on Manda Island (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club,* 2012, 19: 101).]

Böhm's Spinetail** ***Neafrapus boehmi
Seen at Witu, August 1970 (Britton & Britton 1970), although Britton (1980) gave coastal records north only to Sokoke, where it is resident (Lewis & Pomeroy 1989). Also found at Witu 26 April 2010 (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2010, 17: 244). Doubt has been thrown by Brown & Britton (1980: 68) on a breeding record in an underground chamber in Sokoke in late January, though why they doubt it is not explained —the nest site is quite normal (Brooke 1966), although nesting in a baobab was also probable there in December (Short & Horne 1985). The one record from Somalia is of an August specimen in the extreme south (Ash & Miskell 1998). There is probably some dispersal in the non-breeding season, as in Zambia (Dowsett *et al.* 2008).

Mottled Spinetail ***Telacanthura ussheri***
Uncommon: one seen regularly around a patch of forest near base camp. One in a group of swifts and swallows over coastal thickets (Sandamuke) 25 December. The genus is spelled correctly here, not *Telecanthura* as in EANHS (2009).

African Palm Swift ***Cypsiurus parvus***
Common, throughout, feeding pulli at nest (*Hyphaene*) 25 December (eggs probably laid November).

Common Swift ***Apus apus***
Palaearctic migrant: some flying south in November, on few a dates.

Forbes-Watson's Swift ***Apus berliozi***
This highly local species breeds in caves off the coast of Somalia and migrates to the

Kenya coast from October–February (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996, 2001). First few seen on 1 November (Luimshi), and thereafter at least once a week, usually a few drifting south, or feeding in rain clouds. Probably wintering in 2006 as still seen regularly in December, including on 25 December with other swifts and swallows. Calls reminiscent of African Black Swift *A. barbatus*. Flies more slowly than either *A. barbatus* or *A. apus*, more leisurely, showing big white chin.

Little Swift *Apus affinis*
In Mpeketoni town and occasionally wandering into the Conservancy, e.g. near Lake Kenyatta (24 October). Two at headquarters on 24 October.

Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*
Widespread and common, thicket-clump and wooded savanna. One November clutch.

Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina*
Common in coastal thickets as well as in tall forest (Witu Extension, Luimshi, old dune forest at Sandamuke). Much singing in October until early December.

Rufous-crowned Roller *Coracias naevius*
A few, singles or pairs, in open savanna with few trees (doums etc.) at Ziwa Lamuu and drier sections of coastal *ziwa*. October–December, possibly resident.

Lilac-breasted Roller *Coracias caudatus*
Common and widespread in savanna; strongly territorial. In November many territories with just the male posted while the female was brooding in a tree hole (usually in *Hyphaene*). Some completed breeding by October (family with fully-grown juveniles). One feeding a fledgling 16 December (clutch laid September or October). Probably at least one September clutch, one October and two November.

Eurasian Roller *Coracias garrulus
Palaearctic migrant, collected in the Kipini area 13 March (Stager 1973). There are also records from Garsen (Britton 1980) and Massabubu (1 November: Fischer & Reichenow 1879).

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*
Several seen October, especially hunting at dusk, but silent. Noisy and territorial from 1 November, fighting neighbours over holes. Some females sitting in early November. Still very noisy by end of December. At least three laying in November.

Grey-headed Kingfisher *Halcyon leucocephala*
Very common, noisy, throughout savanna country. Occupied nest hole (incubating) on 23 October.

Striped Kingfisher *Halcyon chelicuti*
The most numerous kingfisher, throughout savanna.

Mangrove Kingfisher *Halcyon senegaloides*
Very common (and noisy) in coastal thickets in October, singing in duets at dawn

and dusk. Heard two singing to each other in forest clumps opposite base camp (October, early November); seen at new camp. Heard at forest edges in Witu Extension and Luimshi. Not singing in second half of November nor December and then easily overlooked (none seen December).

African Pygmy Kingfisher *Ceyx pictus

The migratory subspecies *natalensis* from southern Africa was reported at Witu (Britton 1980). It occurs as a non-breeding visitor on the Kenyan coast, north to Malindi, April to August (Britton & Britton 1974). The Percival collection includes four specimens from the Tana River, from Momba Sassa north to Kidore, dated between 11 January and 22 February, which suggests they may breed this far north.

Malachite Kingfisher *Alcedo cristata*

Widespread at small pools, flooded pans in several *ziwa*s, even at road-side (thus one roosting in *Indigofera* edge of the main road). Pair displaying at K4 *ziwa* 25 November.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Uncommon wanderer: one at base camp on 12 October; one shores of Lake Kenyatta 12 November.

Little Bee-eater *Merops pusillus*

In pairs and family groups, dense grassland in open palm savanna or edges of *ziwa*s. Widespread but somewhat local.

White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis*

Intra-African migrant: common wintering species, throughout. Hunts low down, from shrubs, and roosts in baobabs or other large trees in groups of 20–25.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops persicus*

Palaearctic migrant, on southward passage. First noted on 4 November (several), becoming very common mid–to late November (dozens daily, feeding over *ziwa*s). Last (several) on 6 December, but there are specimens from Momba Sassa and Massa dated 9 January and 30 June (N. Rice *in litt.*), while more than 100 were near Witu on 26 April 2010 (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club*, 2010, 17: 244).

Eurasian Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Palaearctic migrant, apparently marginal: groups flying south on 9–21 October (numerous on 21); also on 18 November (over beach).

Northern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicus*

Common "wintering" species, scattered around *ziwa*s, taking position on the back of mammals (Warthogs *Phacochoerus africanus* are special favourites, and also Zebras, Buffalo, Topis *Damaliscus korrigum*) to feed on disturbed insects. Defend their "mammal territory" against congeners. Also hunt from shrubs. Normally breeds in sand cliffs on the Tana when water levels are low.

Green Wood-hoopoe *Phoeniculus purpureus*

Confined to tall, closed-canopy forest in Witu Extension.

Violet Wood-hoopoe *Phoeniculus damarensis*
Very common and widespread, savanna and forest clumps, also in coastal thickets. Spends most of its time feeding in bark crevices and among leaf bases of *Hyphaene compressa*, also occasionally in other trees (e.g. *Trichilia emetica*).

Common Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*
Common and widespread, forest clumps, coastal thickets, groves of *Acacia zanzibarica*.

Crowned Hornbill *Tockus alboterminatus*
In pairs or family groups, widespread in coastal thickets, forest clumps, or more continuous forest (Luimshi, Witu Extension).

Trumpeter Hornbill *Bycanistes bucinator*
In small numbers but very widespread, thicket-clump savanna and forest. Seen feeding on fruits of *Diospyros abyssinica* (Witu Extension), *Manilkara sansibarensis, Flacourtia indica, Ekebergia capensis* (October), and figs. Male feeding young or female at nest 31 October in a big *Parkia* (Witu Extension).

Southern Ground Hornbill *Bucorvus leadbeateri
This Globally Vulnerable species was reported from Witu (Britton 1980), but now likely extinct.

[**Green Barbet *Stactolaema olivacea***
Reported in coastal Kenya north to the Tana River (Britton 1980, Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1957). Although these authors gave no source, this is clearly based on van Someren (1932: 279): "I have found the species to be very plentiful in certain localities, from the type locality Rabai to the Tana River at its mouth and south to the Usambara Mts". No details of the Tana report appear to have been published. Never recorded in the Tana Primate Reserve, and in our opinion there is no suitable forest for this species in the Witu-Kipini area, as it is largely dependent on an abundance of rain forest fig trees. It is unlikely to occur north of Marafa (Kilifi) Ganda forest (north of Vanga).]

Green Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus simplex*
More local and spaced-out than Yellow-rumped, in broken-up tall forest. One singing in Witu Extension (against 5–6 Yellow-rumped in the patch visited), one near Kangawati, one at Luimshi, and one in a patch of forest opposite base camp. Two seen crossing the road near base camp once (RJD). The song is somewhat more metallic than that of Yellow-rumped and consists of more notes (15–20), delivered in a faster trill. Hitherto not known north of Sokoke Forest (Britton 1980) and absent from Somalia (Ash & Miskell 1998).

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus*
Common in forest in Witu Extension, elsewhere confined to some patches of tall forest (such as old dune forest at Sandamuke). Some wanderers: one singing in coastal thicket 30 November where never heard before nor after, one stopping in base camp to sing a few phrases in a *Trichilia* on 3 December. Usual song of this coastal form is quite unlike that of other populations of the species. Its song is much closer to that of Green Tinkerbird, consisting of trills of 8–12 notes (with an introductory note). Comes readily to tape playback of its own song, but also to that of Green Tinkerbird from

Malawi! Some birds seen closely had a greenish wash below, and we suspect this coastal population may have hybridized with Green Tinkerbirds, which would also explain their unusual song. The one specimen from the region (collected by Fenwick at Momba Sassa, February 1927) is attributed to the race *fischeri*, and has not been reported previously. These are extensions of the known distribution northwards from Arabuko-Sokoke (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). In addition, D.A. Turner (pers. comm.) heard a trill of one or other tinkerbird at Kiunga on 23 September 1990 in thick coastal thicket.

Red-fronted Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus pusillus*
Common throughout, in savanna, coastal thickets and forest.

Black-collared Barbet *Lybius torquatus*
Widespread in thicket clumps and patches of broken forest; not in extensive coastal thickets. Noisy throughout October–December.

Brown-breasted Barbet *Lybius melanopterus*
Widespread in thicket clumps, patches of broken forest, edge of forest at Luimshi and Witu Extension. Very noisy in October–early November, more quiet later (common call is a "kraa-kraa-kraa-kraa"). Eats a variety of small fruit.

Pallid Honeyguide *Indicator meliphilus*
Seen on three occasions, twice an individual within 1–2 km of base camp (flying into tall trees). On 30 November a song-post was located in the crown of a large baobab in coastal thicket (road to Seven Sisters after forking right). The song is a series of 12–15 notes delivered at the rate of 14/11 s, or 15/11 or 12 s, "tjuwi-it, tjuwi-it, t....". It sounds very similar to that of its close relative, the Guineo-Congolian Willcock's Honeyguide *I. willcocksi*. It was singing actively at 08:30–09:00, occasionally changing its position in the tree, and flycatching between songs. At 09:00, the bird was visited by a congener, presumably a female (sitting in a hunched position): he stopped singing, flitted around her, and followed her when she left the tree. Hitherto not known north of Sokoke Forest (Britton 1980) and absent from Somalia (Ash & Miskell 1998).

Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*
One or two seen October (one heard Mpeketoni November). Not seen later, when barbets (its normal hosts) rather inactive.

Scaly-throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus*
Two different song-posts at either side of base camp (October–December), also locally in Sandamuke (old dune forest).

Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*
Widespread, savanna and forest clumps. A few singing October–early November, only one brief song in December, but some "guiding" calls (base camp, Kenyatta camp).

Nubian Woodpecker *Campethera nubica*

Widespread in open palm savanna, thicket-clump savanna (*Xeromphis, Dalbergia, Dichrostachys*), edges of dry thicket, and groves of *Acacia zanzibarica*. Bigger territories than other woodpeckers.

Mombasa Woodpecker *Campethera mombassica*
Common in any form of thicket and forest: from Witu Extension to coastal thickets (and the only woodpecker in the latter). Feeds low down, usually hidden, as well as higher up (canopy trees, tall palms). Distinctive rolled calls "weerr, weerr, weerr, weerr, wur", quite unlike the single nasal note of its closest relative, the Golden-tailed Woodpecker *C. abingoni*. The transcription in Zimmerman *et al.* (1996) "keeoank-yaaaank-yaaaank..." appears rather inappropriate.

Green-backed Woodpecker *Campethera cailliautii*
Common in forest clumps, broken forest and closed tall-canopy forest: from Witu Extension, Luimshi to base camp. Not in extensive coastal thickets. Feeds overall higher than Mombasa Woodpecker, often on doum palms.

Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens*
Somewhat patchily distributed, in thicket-clump savanna, frequently feeding on doum palms. Also in *Acacia zanzibarica* (G4).

Black-and-white Flycatcher *Bias musicus*
Vagrant? Only one sighting, of a male associated with a large bird party at base camp, 13 October (RJD). Was completely silent. Never seen or heard anywhere else, although suitable habitat certainly exists: forest clumps with emergent *Hyphaene* appear very similar in structure to other dry forests occupied by the species (e.g. *Sterculia* forest in Lengwe N.P., Malawi: Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2006). There are historical records from the Kenya coast from a few localities north to Takaungu (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). Already by the 1980s it was said to have been unrecorded for more than 50 years (Britton & Zimmerman 1979). Yet there have been many reports in recent years from coastal forests further south, in Tanzania (e.g. Jensen *et al.* 2005). The Meru population in central Kenya too has also been shown to be extant (Pearson & Turner 1998). Whether any more than just the odd bird remains in coastal Kenya remains to be elucidated, with more extensive surveys of the Kipini Conservancy needed.

[**Forest Batis *Batis mixta***
Reported "... to the lower Tana River" (van Someren 1932), probably a misidentification.]

[**Pale Batis *Batis soror***
Reported from the lower Tana River and Lamu (Britton 1980), the former apparently based on the statement by van Someren (1932: 297) "... to the Tana River." Considered unconfirmed by Zimmerman *et al.* (1996).]

Black-headed Batis *Batis minor*
Widespread in the canopy and emergents of coastal thickets, also in *Acacia zanzibarica* woodland and small thickets near Ziwa Lamuu. Voice distinctive, a rising "tuee", then "tuuwee" (modulated), followed by a succession of "tuee tuee tuee tuee" slow and deliberate, 2 notes/s. Thus rather different from the voice of the form *erlangeri* (*cf.* Chappuis 2000).

Black-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira peltata
Reported from Witu (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996), as well as Lamu on the coast (Jackson & Sclater 1938) and the Tana River (*e.g.* Hewani: Andrews *et al.* 1975).

Retz's Helmetshrike *Prionops retzii*
Very common in coastal thickets (canopy, emergents), all forest types and thicket-clump savanna with tall palms, baobabs etc. Spends much time feeding among leaves, inflorescence and bark of tall *Hyphaene compressa*. Several groups had immatures, some still begging.

[Chestnut-fronted Helmetshrike *Prionops scopifrons*
Apart from old records from Lamu and Malindi (van Someren 1932, Jackson & Sclater 1938), unreported on the coast between Boni, on the Somali/Kenya border (Ash & Miskell 1998, Stager 1973) and Sokoke (Britton & Zimmerman 1979). Listed from the Lower Tana forests (Important Bird Area #23: Bennun & Njoroge 1999), and mapped for that area (Lewis & Pomeroy 1989), but with no details. Range on coast shown as continuous in Zimmerman *et al.* (1996), but the Kipini gap seems to be real.]

Grey-headed Bushshrike *Malaconotus blanchoti*
Large, scattered territories occupied in tall palm country with small thickets below (e.g. western border of Lake Kenyatta), ecotone of coastal thicket and grassland, and forest clumps in grassland (e.g. Luimshi).

Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus sulfureopectus*
Locally in thicket-clump savanna with some thorn trees (e.g. *Dichrostachys, Xeromphis*), at edges of coastal thickets and in *Acacia zanzibarica* stands with thickets.

[Gorgeous Bushshrike *Chlorophoneus viridis*
There are old specimen records from Lamu (collected by Clarke) and the "Lower Tana" (van Someren) in Jackson & Sclater (1938). The former was mentioned by Clarke (1913) when he named the race *nigricauda*, but it is not clear if there was indeed a specimen from that locus (and Clarke made it clear that many specimens were obtained along the coast by a native collector, in his absence, thus mislabelling remains a possibility). There is no specimen from Boni (Stager 1973). We are unaware of any records in the past 25 years or more north of Sokoke (Britton & Zimmerman 1979). It is not clear what the justification is for its inclusion on the Tana River Delta list (Important Bird Area #22, in Bennun & Njoroge 1999), but possibly there has been confusion with the voice of Slate-coloured Boubou.]

Brown-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra australis*
One of the few species found in the short, impenetrable thickets on live dunes. Also at thicket edges (ecotone between coastal thicket and palm savanna) in coastal area. Not found beyond 2–3 km of the coast.

Three-streaked Tchagra *Tchagra jamesi
There are specimens from Witu (Jackson 1898), Lamu and Manda (van Someren 1922). There is no suitable habitat within the Conservancy.

Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus*
Very common throughout savanna habitats, thicket clumps, *Acacia* woodland.

Black-backed Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla*
Very common, throughout, all forest and thicket types and palm savanna. A fledgling October would be from an egg laid August.

Slate-coloured Boubou *Laniarius funebris*
In drier types of thicket, including on live dunes where common. Also in thickets on coral, such as on the northern boundary road and very locally at the edge of thicket near the coastal *ziwa*. Has a variety of song motifs, often disyllabic "kotiok, kotiok", or "kou-ik, kou-ik" etc. The latter is fairly similar to the dialect of Gorgeous Bushshrike at Arabuko-Sokoke ("ouik, kou-ik kou-ik"), so much so that tape playback experiments with our Sokoke tape were carried out in several sections of dune thicket: only Slate-coloured Boubous were confirmed to occur there, one in particular coming to the tape of Gorgeous Bush-shrike and reacting very strongly, in full view on a bush.

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius aethiopicus*
Widespread, in the interior of coastal thickets and large clumps elsewhere. Very difficult to see, but the few birds seen were black-and-white, although a black boubou is known from the coastal region, and the type of *nigerrimus* was collected at Kipini by Fischer in 1878 (Reichenow 1879). It has been suggested that the black birds represent a separate species, but their taxonomic status requires further investigation, as explained by Turner *et al.* (2011).

Black Cuckooshrike *Campephaga flava*
Intra-African migrant, widespread in October (forest patches, coastal thickets, Witu Extension); decreasing in November with last ones (one female, a male in song) on 15th.

[**Northern White-crowned Shrike *Eurocephalus rueppelli***
Sclater (1930: 601) reported it south along the coast to about Witu, but evidence for Witu is unknown. It appears to be known only inland of this area, e.g. Hewani (Andrews *et al.* 1975).]

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*
Palaearctic migrant, with heavy passage in November. First male seen on 29 October; mostly males passing in the first two weeks of November, with females and immatures becoming more common in second half of the month. Evidently a few winter in wooded savanna, including some adult and immature males seen at fixed posts until our departure in late December.

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus*
Palaearctic migrant, much less common than congener: a few identified last week of November, 1–2 probably wintering as one male seen in *Dobera* trees in sandy coastal *ziwa* on 26 December.

Long-tailed Fiscal L*anius cabanisi*
Very local resident: a pair and two immatures in very open grassland (with few *Hyphaene compressa*) on northern boundary; one pair in palm savanna on the edge of Luimshi pan.

African Golden Oriole *Oriolus auratus*
Status unclear, some singing and passing through forest and thicket clumps in October. One sang briefly in a baobab on 14 December.

Black-headed Oriole ***Oriolus larvatus***
Fairly widespread in thicket-clump savanna and in forest (including Witu Extension, Luimshi). Often on the move in October–December, not strongly territorial.

Square-tailed Drongo ***Dicrurus ludwigii***
Very common in mid-storey of tall-canopy forest in Witu Extension; also present (more locally) at Luimshi in sections of closed-canopy forest. Absent from tall forest on old dunes (Sandamuke). The coastal population in Kenya is very isolated, being confined to the Tana drainage (Zimmerman *et al.* 2001). The whole-scale destruction of Witu Extension is therefore very worrying.

Common Drongo ***Dicrurus adsimilis***
Very common throughout palm savanna, thicket clumps, *Acacia zanzibarica* woodland, coastal thickets (emergents especially) and wooded grassland. In open savanna flycatches from low bushes or drops to the ground. At Luimshi and Witu present in broken canopy and emerging palms, next to (above) Square-tailed Drongo.

Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher ***Trochocercus cyanomelas***
Very common in low dense understorey of forest at Witu Extension. Smaller numbers in tongues of forest at Luimshi. Curiously absent from coastal thickets and even taller forest on old dunes (Sandamuke). Another species seriously threatened by forest destruction near Witu.

Little Yellow Flycatcher ***Erythrocercus holochlorus***
Common in forest, whether continuous (Witu Extension) or broken into large clumps (Luimshi, old dunes, one patch near base camp), as well as in coastal thickets. Very vocal in October–November, much less so in December.

African Paradise Flycatcher ***Terpsiphone viridis***
Intra-African migrant, common in October, defending territories in coastal thickets and forest clumps near base camp. Disappeared before the end of the month (last recorded 21 October).

Pied Crow ***Corvus albus***
Occasional visitor to headquarters, cattle post, and a pair once flying near the beach.

Sand Martin ***Riparia riparia***
Palaearctic migrant: a few wintering (savanna, *ziwa*s), with Barn Swallows. First noted on 23 October.

Barn Swallow ***Hirundo rustica***
Palaearctic migrant, wintering commonly throughout the area, often resting on shrubs edge of *ziwa*s.

Ethiopian Swallow** ***Hirundo aethiopica
Collected at Kipini in March (Stager 1973) and reported at Lamu (Britton 1980).

Common House Martin ***Delichon urbicum***
Palaearctic migrant: one on 13 December. A possible one in November. Often flies too high to be noticed.

Lesser Striped Swallow *Cecropis abyssinica*
Occasionally a dozen around the buildings at headquarters.

Mosque Swallow *Cecropis senegalensis*
In isolated pairs, rather uncommon.

[**Singing Bush Lark *Mirafra cantillans***
Claimed "... to the mouth of the Tana River" (van Someren 1932: 336), but this is far from the known range of the species (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).]

[**Red-winged Lark *Mirafra hypermetra***
Reported from the lower Tana (Britton 1980). No source is given but it is clearly based on van Someren (1932: 335): "I have.... birds from.... the coast at Kipini and Mongeya." That this species should occur on the coast is surprising, and this is missing from the map in Zimmerman *et al.* 1996.]

Flappet Lark *Mirafra rufocinnamomea*
Numerous in rank grassland, edge of *ziwa*s and open palm savanna. Singing and alarm-calling throughout; frequently flushed by car on roads. Several birds feeding young November–December; at least four clutches would have been laid October and November.

Chestnut-backed Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix leucotis*
A rare visitor: an immature male with Malindi Pipits in short grass and sand in the drier section of coastal *ziwa*, 17 December.

[**Tana River Cisticola *Cisticola restrictus***
This is a taxon of uncertain validity, with a very limited distribution, from north to south: Sangole, Ijara, Mnazini, Garsen, Karawa (Britton 1980, Traylor 1967a). It is probably a hybrid between Rattling Cisticola *C. chiniana* and Ashy Cisticola *C. cinereolus*. Both of these species occur in dry vegetation, including thornbush, inland, and there is no suitable habitat for them in Kipini Conservancy. For instance, they both occur on the southern bank of the Tana, in Retief's camp, where found by D.A. Turner (pers. comm.) in December 1992).]

Coastal Cisticola *Cisticola haematocephalus*
Very common throughout *ziwa*s and any open wooded grassland (grass with *Hibiscus, Indigofera* and *Cassia* forbs), with or without standing water. Also in sedges in flooded sections, including Lake Kenyatta. Single clutches laid September, October, November and December (all based on adults feeding at nest). Although treated as a distinct species in EANHS (2009), our field and museum experience convinces us it is best treated as a race of Winding Cisticola *Cisticola galactotes*.

Siffling Cisticola *Cisticola brachypterus*
Very common throughout, in wooded grassland (palm savanna).

Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*
Locally common in very large and relatively dry *ziwa*s near the northern boundary, including part of coastal *ziwa* (Baharini) and open palm savanna with medium-long grass and *Agathisanthemum* herbs.

[**Desert Cisticola *Cisticola aridulus***
Recorded (under the name *C. lavandulae, sic*) from the Lower Tana River, without details (van Someren 1922), and not mapped from anywhere near this area by Zimmerman *et al.* (1996).]

Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava*
Very common in any grassland of *ziwa* and open palm savanna, or thicket edges. Avoids the wetter sections of *ziwa*s, present in shallow flooded sections (with *Hibiscus*). One clutch each laid September and October. Some pairs had bred earlier and remained inactive (independent juveniles still with parents).

[**Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida***
Apparently absent from the forests of the Tana Primate Reserve *sensu stricto*, being noted only in drier *acacia/commiphora* or *Dobera* bush (Andrews *et al.* 1975). The ecological preferences of this thicket species vary geographically, but if confined to thornbush in the Tana, then the reason for its absence from Kipini is rather obvious.]

[**White-winged Apalis *Apalis chariessa***
This Globally Vulnerable species was known on the Lower Tana at Mitole (the type was collected in 1878: Fischer & Reichenow 1879) and 23 miles north of Garsen, thus perhaps in the Primate Reserve (where collected in 1961: Traylor 1967b). There are no other reports from the Tana River. The recurrence and severity of droughts in the region probably mean that the future of this species was hanging by a thread. Its survival on the Tana was probably in jeopardy even if the existing forests had been well preserved. From what we know of its ecology in Malawi, where another race is or was locally common (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2006), the species is at home in rain forest dominated by Mimosaceae, spending much of its time feeding in the feathery foliage of canopy trees (*Albizia, Newtonia*). Some Mimosaceae with suitable architecture were present in the Tana riparian forests but are missing completely from the type of semi-evergreen forests found near Witu. We do not think therefore that there was much chance of finding this species in the Witu Extension *sensu lato*.]

Black-headed Apalis *Apalis melanocephala*
Very common in closed-canopy forest in Witu Extension, much more scattered in forest strips at Luimshi. Absent from apparently suitable tall forest on old dunes (Sandamuke). Should be largely exterminated from the Conservancy with the complete destruction of Witu Extension.

Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura*
Widespread in small and large thickets. Very common in the understorey of coastal thickets and tall forest (Witu etc.). A big fledgling in October would have been from an August clutch.

Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*
Widespread in savanna habitats, edge of thickets and canopy of forest patches. A very young fledgling 13 December was from a clutch laid November.

Zanzibar Greenbul *Andropadus importunus*
Very common (and noisy) in thicket clumps, palm savanna with shrubs, coastal thickets (including on live dunes) and forest edges.

Yellow-bellied Greenbul *Chlorocichla flaviventris*
Common in tall forest, whether continuous (Witu Extension) or in patches. Also in coastal thickets, especially around *Spirostachys* pools, where trees taller. Very few calling in October (none in coastal thickets), but singing actively November–December.

Terrestrial Brownbul *Phyllastrephus terrestris*
Very local, found in small numbers in coastal thickets (road to Seven Sisters) in October.

Northern Brownbul *Phyllastrephus strepitans*
Very common in thicket-clump savanna, moving from clump to clump in small groups. Common in coastal thickets 5–6 m tall and in shorter thickets (2–3 m) on dunes. Also at forest edges but does not enter tall forest.

Fischer's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus fischeri*
Confined to understorey of closed, tall-canopy forest. Very common in Witu Extension, smaller numbers at Luimshi. Very local in old dune forest (Sandamuke): found only under the canopy of *Combretum schumannii* in a tongue of forest *c.* 1 km long.

[Tiny Greenbul *Phyllastrephus debilis*
There is supposedly a specimen from the Tana River mouth (van Someren 1932, Jackson & Sclater 1938), and Jensen *et al.* (2005) repeat that it is "widespread in coastal Kenya from Tana River south". It has not been found in the Tana Primate Reserve and is unknown in Somalia, the most northerly records otherwise being Ganda forest, Kilifi district (Jackson & Sclater 1938) and Sokoke (Britton & Zimmerman (1979).]

Eastern Nicator *Nicator gularis*
Widespread and common in coastal thickets and large clumps of forest, as well as in Witu Extension.

[Little Rush Warbler *Bradypterus baboecala*
There is a specimen from the Delta area at Tschara (Fischer & Reichenow 1879), and one was collected on the Tana upstream near Hewani (Andrews *et al.* 1975). The absence of this marsh-loving warbler from the edge of Lake Kenyatta is not easily explained. The tall flooded grassland of the coastal *ziwa* also looks suitable, but the seasonal character of much of the marshland vegetation may on the whole exclude this warbler.]

[Moustached Grass Warbler *Melocichla mentalis*
Collected at Oda (N. Rice *in litt.*)]

Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris*
A few pairs in bulrushes and sedges edge of Lake Kenyatta (November). Invaded coastal *ziwa* (K4) as flood increased and vegetation developed: first heard on 1 December, becoming common in mid-December, in sedges but also taller stands of aquatic grasses. Much singing, alarm-calling, chasing of neighbours gave the impression breeding had started.

Eurasian Reed Warbler ***Acrocephalus scirpaceus***
Palaearctic migrant: one heard (subsong) in tall sedges, edge of Lake Kenyatta, 12 November.

[**Olive-tree Warbler** ***Hippolais olivetorum***
Palaearctic migrant. There are specimens from Oda and Ngao, 2 and 3 January (N. Rice *in litt.*); the former is catalogued as from Oda Boda, but the date shows it must have been from Oda.]

Northern Crombec ***Sylvietta brachyura***
Common in stands of *Acacia zanzibarica* near Ziwa Lamuu, with smaller numbers in wooded palm savanna elsewhere, often in *Xeromphis-Dalbergia-Dichrostachys.*

Rufous Chatterer ***Turdoides rubiginosa***
Rare, only two sightings: one well seen at headquarters, coming out of low secondary bush (*Hoslundia opposita,* palm saplings) to perch on a fence; one crossing the road 2–3 km north of base camp.

Scaly Babbler ***Turdoides squamulata***
Common in thicket-clump savanna, moving in small groups from one clump to the next. Also in the understorey of coastal thickets (including live dunes). Does not penetrate forest. Often in mixed parties with Northern Brownbul, which has similar ecological requirements.

Abyssinian White-eye** ***Zosterops abyssinicus
The race *flavilateralis* is reported from Witu, as well as Lamu and Manda (van Someren 1922). Specimens from Kipini and Tschara were attributed to the race *tenellus* (Fischer & Reichenow 1879), now considered a synonym of nominate African Yellow White-eye *Z. senegalensis.* Although Moreau (1957: 411-12) seems not to have taken these specimens into account, they must certainly also be *Z. abyssinicus.*

Rüppell's Starling ***Lamprotornis purpuropterus***
More of a savanna bird than last, especially in tall palm savanna with only small thickets. Also any wooded savanna with short grass or bare ground where feeds a lot. Eggs were laid in October in a nest observed from building to nestlings.

Black-bellied Starling ***Lamprotornis corruscus***
Very widespread and quite common, in all forest and thicket types, as well as open palm savanna, wherever can find fruit. Seen killing a large gecko in a *Hyphaene.* Fledglings in October would have been from eggs laid August.

Magpie Starling** ***Speculipastor bicolor
Three specimens of this erratic species were collected at Kipini, 11 July (Fischer & Reichenow 1879).

Red-billed Oxpecker ***Buphagus erythrorhynchus***
Common, in dozens when attending large herds of Buffalo. Also on Warthog and Zebra. Often tries Waterbuck *Kobus ellipsiprymnus* who shake them off. Never on Topis. One of a pair seen taking hair from a young zebra for nest-building, 25 December.

Red-tailed Ant Thrush *Neocossyphus rufus*
Very common in forest understorey in Witu Extension, smaller numbers in any tall forest and also in coastal thickets. May move between clumps of *Trichilia/Hyphaene* forest, flying across roads or open savanna.

Spotted Ground Thrush *Zoothera guttata
Globally Endangered. Fischer collected two specimens at Kipini, 25 and 28 July (Fischer & Reichenow 1878, who give the date of the first, in error, as 28 May). The coastal non-breeding range is also known to extend to Lamu, where collected by Allen Turner (Jackson & Sclater 1938), but a recent review of the status of this endangered species (Ndang'ang'a *et al.* 2008) did not provide any further information from this area.

African Bare-eyed Thrush *Turdus tephronotus
Specimens were collected at Witu (Jackson 1898), and it is also reported from Kipini (J.M. Hildebrandt in Jackson & Sclater 1938), although it is not clear that Hildebrandt travelled that far north. Known from Lamu and Manda (Fischer & Reichenow 1878, van Someren 1922).

[East Coast Akalat *Sheppardia gunningi*
Known in forests along the Lower Tana from near Hewani (Andrews *et al.* 1975) and further north at Makeri (Keith 1968): these two localities correspond to "Garsen to Wenje" (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). Although there are no recent records north of Sokoke (Nemeth & Bennun 2000), the Tana River patches have not been explored during the past few years.]

Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*
Palaearctic migrant: scarce wintering species, with one singing in thicket clump on 1 December, and another singing (clearly immature, motifs not fully formed) on 9 December.

White-browed Robin Chat *Cossypha heuglini*
Very common in thicket clumps, also at edges of coastal thicket and in small gaps with broken canopy. Does not enter forest.

Red-capped Robin Chat *Cossypha natalensis*
Very common in October, throughout any forest (continuous or in clumps) and coastal thickets (including large clumps). Numbers decreasing in November until last one heard calling ("see-saw") on 29th. However, there are specimens in the Percival collection between 7 January and 21 February, from Punewani and Mwina. Hitherto the race *intensa* was believed present only late April to November (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

Much singing in October and early November: all birds were heard imitating Emerald Cuckoo (not present on the coast), as well as Black Cuckoo (ditto), and at least two different individuals imitated Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx montanus*. This suggests the origin of these robins could be the highlands of Kenya, or further south in the region of the Zambezi valley. Other imitations were of local birds like Crowned Eagle, Levaillant's Cuckoo, Thick-billed Cuckoo, White-throated Bee-eater,

Sulphur-breasted Bushshrike, African Golden Oriole, and interestingly they reproduced calls of Eurasian Bee-eaters when they were passing over (October).

[**Collared Palm Thrush** ***Cichladusa arquata*** and **Spotted Palm Thrush** ***Cichladusa guttata***
The former is known from Hewani on the Tana and Lamu on the coast (Andrews *et al.* 1975, Jackson & Sclater 1938), the latter from Lamu and Kau in the Tana delta (Fischer & Reichenow 1879, van Someren 1922).]

Bearded Scrub Robin ***Cercotrichas quadrivirgata***
Very common in large thickets and forest, the interior of extensive coastal thickets as well as large clumps. Need bigger patches of thicket than White-browed Robin Chat. Very common also in Witu Extension, Luimshi etc., in tall-canopy forest. Vocally very active in October–December, and much alarm-calling (suggesting breeding). A few vocal imitations, including of Thick-billed Cuckoo.

[**White-browed Scrub Robin** ***Cercotrichas leucophrys***
Reported "... to the mouth of the Tana River" (van Someren 1932: 376), and known at Hewani (Andrews *et al.* 1975)]

Isabelline Wheatear** ***Oenanthe isabellina
Palaearctic migrant, collected at Kipini, 15 December (Fischer & Reichenow 1879).

Northern Wheatear ***Oenanthe oenanthe***
Palaearctic migrant: one on sand near Mpeketoni, 23 October.

[**Southern Black Flycatcher** ***Melaenornis pammelaina***
Known from the Lower Tana in the Hewani area (Andrews *et al.* 1975), and on the coast collected in Boni (Stager 1973).]

Pale Flycatcher ***Bradornis pallidus***
Common in thicket-clump savanna, and adjacent wooded grassland; also in *Acacia zanzibarica* woodland. Large fledglings in October would have been from an August clutch.

Spotted Flycatcher ***Muscicapa striata***
Palaearctic migrant: very local, 1–2 found only in *Acacia zanzibarica* woodland late November–December.

Ashy Flycatcher ***Muscicapa caerulescens***
Fairly common in canopy/emergents of coastal thickets, and large clumps of broken-canopy forest anywhere. Also in canopy of tall forest in Witu Extension.

Lead-coloured Flycatcher ***Myioparus plumbeus***
Small numbers in thicket-clump savanna, patches of broken-canopy forest.

[**Plain-backed Sunbird** ***Anthreptes reichenowi***
An "Eastern forest" endemic, with its northern limit of distribution in the riparian forests of the Lower Tana, where a pair was seen near Hewani (Andrews *et al.* 1975:

19). It is not known from Witu F.R., but could conceivably be found in the moister forests of Witu Extension or Kangawati. The only vocalization on commercial tape is the song, which is not of territorial value. A tape of its aggressive call (to which it reacts strongly) was therefore obtained at Arabuko-Sokoke Forest in November. We did not have the opportunity of exploring the big forest gallery at Kangawati to look for this sunbird.]

[Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes neglectus*
Known from the Lower Tana forests at Kitere (Butynski 1994) and Makeri (Keith 1968), but on the coast there is no record north of the Shimba Hills and Diani (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996), more than 200 km to the south.]

Collared Sunbird *Anthodiaeta collaris*
The most numerous sunbird in coastal thickets or any forest. Also in thicket-clump savanna and *Acacia zanzibarica* woodland. Observations suggested four clutches laid October (one C/2), two clutches November (one C/1). The genus for this sunbird has to be as above, and not *Hedydipna*, as in EANHS (2009), see Mann & Cheke (2006).

Olive Sunbird *Cyanomitra olivacea*
Common in coastal thickets and forest (Witu Extension, any patch of tall forest), and in well developed thicket clumps.

Mouse-coloured Sunbird *Cyanomitra veroxii*
Completely overlooked in October, when silent. Found commonly from 10 November–December in a coastal strip only *c.* 2 km wide. Very common in dune thickets, on the edge of coastal thickets inside of the dunes and extending a short way inland in wooded grassland and palm savanna in the Baharini area. Does not reach headquarters nor base camp area.

Amethyst Sunbird *Chalcomitra amethystina*
The most widespread and common savanna sunbird, feeding on flowers of *Trichilia, Erythrina* and *Combretum constrictum*. Takes *Hyphaene* palm wine from taps! Does not enter forest but feeds at edges or in open canopy of clumps.

Violet-breasted Sunbird *Cinnyris chalcomelas*
Very marginal in the area: a female well seen in savanna near base camp on 28 October, possible pair/male flying through the area on other occasions; also a female (well seen) and possible male on 12 December, feeding on tiny flowers of *Hyphaene compressa*. Clearly more at home in drier thornbush around Garsen: several males in full song there, before and after the Garsen/Malindi turn-off, in *Acacia* spp., *Dichrostachys, Prosopis*, 19–26 December. The area was then very wet. There are female specimens attributed to Black-bellied Sunbird *Nectarinia nectarinioides* (Momba Sasa), which ought to be re-examined, in view of the difficulties in identifying females of some sunbirds.

Variable Sunbird *Cinnyris venustus*
White-bellied form (*albiventris*) confined to low dense thickets on live dunes, where very common.

Grey-headed Sparrow *Passer griseus*
Marginal: around small cotton farm on the northern boundary road. One or two calling in *Acacia zanzibarica* woodland near Ziwa Lamuu.

[**Yellow-spotted Petronia *Petronia pyrgita***
Collected by Fenwick at Kulesa (N. Rice *in litt.*).]

Grosbeak Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons*
A flock (20+) at Lake Kenyatta on 23 October, one bird on 5 December. Three nests there in *Typha*, not occupied. A few birds around Luimshi pan November.

Spectacled Weaver *Ploceus ocularis*
Heard once in a forest clump near Luimshi pan.

Black-necked Weaver *Ploceus nigricollis*
Very local: a few pairs in *Acacia zanzibarica* woodland at Ziwa Lamuu, and thickets (with *Acacia, Dobera*) near Kenyatta camp. Also seen once at the edge of coastal thicket near K4. Several nests (unoccupied) in *Acacia*.

Eastern Golden Weaver *Ploceus subaureus*
Found only on the edge of Lake Kenyatta, in tall *Cyperus* sedges, 12 November: at least two males and two females.

Golden Palm Weaver *Ploceus bojeri*
The most widespread weaver in the area. Not conspicuous at all in October, but many sightings in November–December with increasing breeding activities. Occupied nests in ambatch (*Aeschynomene cristata*) over water on the edge of Maji-Grass, in herbaceous *Aeschynomene* in flooded cultivation and grass near Luimshi, in neem (*Azadirachta indica*) and in a *Prosopis juliflora* at headquarters, *Hyphaene coriacea* over water in coastal *ziwa*, and in a *Bridelia micrantha* in old cultivation. Nests in isolation or in small colonies. Takes many insects. One October clutch (feeding at nest 11 November); many (20+) laying November and December. There are female specimens attributed to Lesser Masked Weaver *Ploceus intermedius* (Ngao) which ought to be re-examined, in view of the difficulties in identifying female weavers.

Village Weaver *Ploceus cucullatus*
Some small non-breeding flocks in October–early November; not seen late November–December. An old nesting colony in a baobab near base camp remained unattended.

Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor*
Very common in all forest and thicket types, but also in thicket-clump savanna, sometimes flying long distances to reach the next clump or tall *Hyphaene*. In pairs. Laid once in October, twice in November.

Red-headed Weaver *Anaplectes rubriceps
The race *jubaensis* is reported from Kipini by van Someren (1932: 319), and from Kiwayo north to Kiunga (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). The name *Anaplectes melanotis*, used by EANHS (2009), is invalid, see Oschadleus (2009).

Red-billed Quelea ***Quelea quelea***
A small flock of *c.* 20–30 near Kenyatta camp, moving up to Ziwa Lamuu. In grassland, with Pin-tailed Whydahs, October–December.

Fire-fronted Bishop** ***Euplectes diadematus
Collected at Witu in June (Jackson 1898), and there are historical reports from Lamu (Jackson & Sclater 1938, Britton 1980).

Zanzibar Red Bishop ***Euplectes nigroventris***
Widespread, in small numbers in flooded grassland and sedges in various *ziwa*s, and borders of Lake Kenyatta. Already a few in breeding dress in October, increasing numbers in November–December, but still several in only partial dress in coastal *ziwa* by the end of December. It seems the enormous expanses of flooded grassland on the coast should have a lot more bishops than this.

Black-winged Red Bishop** ***Euplectes hordeaceus
Known from Witu (Jackson 1898), Anasa and Lamu (van Someren 1932).

Fan-tailed Widowbird ***Euplectes axillaris***
Does not seem to breed anywhere in the area. One male (in full breeding dress) flying over road on 28 October. One or two (non-breeding) at Luimshi pan in November. Surprisingly absent from Lake Kenyatta.

Common Waxbill ***Estrilda astrild***
Rare in October–early November, when never more than six together. Numbers increasing late November and especially December, feeding on *Panicum* etc. Flocks of up to 12–15 December, some birds in song.

Red-cheeked Cordon-bleu ***Uraeginthus bengalus***
Widespread, in small numbers, in thicket-clump savanna and *Acacia zanzibarica* woodland.

Peters's Twinspot ***Hypargos niveoguttatus***
One record, of one singing in forest clump, north of base camp (October).

[Green-winged Pytilia ***Pytilia melba***
No records and must be rare, but should occur in view of the presence of *Vidua paradisaea* in coastal thickets. Lamu is the type-locality of the race *kirki*, named on the basis of a single undated specimen obtained by Kirk (Jackson & Sclater 1938).]

Red-billed Firefinch ***Lagonosticta senegala***
Curiously very rare. Small group present in neglected cotton field on northern boundary. One pair (male in moult November) seen at thicket edges near coastal *ziwa* (K4) in November–December.

Jameson's Firefinch ***Lagonosticta rhodopareia***
Also very rare: one edge of road just north of base camp, and a pair near Kangawati (October). In thicket-clump savanna.

Orange-breasted Waxbill *Amandava subflava
A specimen was collected at Witu 12 May 1891 (Jackson 1898), on a day when Jackson also got Little Bittern and Grosbeak Weaver.

[**Grey-headed Silverbill *Odontospiza griseicapilla***
Collected at Momba Sasa by Fenwick (N. Rice *in litt.*]

Bronze Mannikin *Spermestes cucullata*
Uncommon, in pairs or small groups, savanna. Nest-building mid-October.

Black-and-White Mannikin *Spermestes bicolor*
More common than last, in thicket-clump savanna and also in forest clumps. Nest-building 24 November.

Parasitic Weaver *Anomalospiza imberbis*
One female was present in a small area of grassland and bushes just north of base camp 12–19 October. Lurking around two pairs of Tawny-flanked Prinias, at least one of which was nest-building. Zimmerman *et al.* (1996) wrote that reports from the Lower Tana floodplain require confirmation. This is perhaps based on plots in Lewis & Pomeroy (1989); we cannot trace the origin of these, and there is no relevant record anywhere in *Scopus*.

Pin-tailed Whydah *Vidua macroura*
Surprisingly large numbers at Ziwa Lamuu and Maji-Grass, up to 100 together and other groups, some with Red-billed Queleas. Also in other areas with short grass, such as headquarters. Males in breeding dress October–December.

Eastern Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea*
Very local: two males in breeding dress at the ecotone between coastal thicket and grassland on 12 October, presumably at the end of the breeding season. None seen on subsequent visits, except one bird in non-breeding dress in a Lawsonia (K4) on 25 December.

Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeata*
Two (in non-breeding dress) at edge of coastal thickets (K4), exactly where Red-billed Firefinch was located, on 25 December.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*
Palaearctic migrant: first noted on 5 November. Winters in good numbers in the big *ziwa*s (Ziwa Lamuu, Maji-Grass) feeding around Zebras, Buffaloes and cattle. Up to 120 going to roost on 13 December; often 20–30 together with game. Few elsewhere, pans with Nile Cabbage. The main race is *lutea*, also a few *flava*.

African Pied Wagtail *Motacilla aguimp*
Usually a couple of immatures at cattle post. Occasionally visits headquarters.

Golden Pipit *Tmetothylacus tenellus*
Rare visitor: one female with Malindi Pipits on 11 December, in drier section of coastal *ziwa* (sand and short grass).

Yellow-throated Longclaw *Macronyx croceus*
Very common, throughout grassland of open palm savanna and *ziwa*s. In *ziwa*s breeds in fairly tall grass above the flood-line. Nest-building and adults feeding young gives one clutch each laid October, November and December.

Grassland Pipit *Anthus cinnamomeus*
Very local: one singing on coral beach at Seven Sisters (12 October). One or two pairs muddy shores of coastal pans, often singing November–December.

Malindi Pipit *Anthus melindae*
Very common, with probably thousands inside the Conservancy. Occupies the short grassland and bare patches (mud or sand) of any *ziwa*. Quite a few singing in October in several places, but pushed out of some *ziwa*s by flooding, e.g. over 40 at base camp in October, but few in November and none after December flooding. By December only a few in song in the drier sections of the coastal *ziwa*, where flocks of dozens locally. Sings perched on a bush or in a circular flight, a double "bizeerr", repeated every second. Common flight call a "pslee", or "psleeu".

Reichenow's Seedeater *Crithagra reichenowi*
A few in October, in open palm savanna. Increasing numbers late November–December, in coastal thickets and all areas of thicket-clump savanna in central reserve, with much singing.

Yellow-fronted Canary *Crithagra mozambica*
Rather common in October, thicket and forest clumps, palm savanna. Numbers decreasing late November–December, contrary to congener.

Discussion

Biomes

The avifauna at Kipini is largely "Eastern" from a biogeographical point of view. The lack of Somalia-Masai *Acacia-Commiphora* bush means that this biome is very poorly represented. The Conservancy constitutes an important refugium for a few species, including storks and Malindi Pipits. The forests are probably too dry (meaning the rainfall this far north is too irregular) to have the full range of forest species found in the south of the country or in the riparian forests in the Tana River Primate Reserve.

Species confined to the Eastern region of endemism *sensu* Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1998, 2006) include Southern Banded Snake Eagle, Fischer's Turaco, Mangrove Kingfisher, Green Tinkerbird, Brown-breasted Barbet, Mombasa Woodpecker, Malindi Pipit, Zanzibar Greenbul (near-endemic), Fischer's Greenbul, Eastern Nicator (near-endemic), Bearded Scrub Robin (near-endemic), Black-headed Apalis, Little Yellow Flycatcher, Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher (near-endemic), Mouse-coloured Sunbird, Violet-breasted Sunbird, Black-bellied Starling (near-endemic), Zanzibar Red Bishop. Most of them are forest-associated species; only a few belong to grassland habitats (Malindi Pipit, Zanzibar Red Bishop). Violet-breasted Sunbird is very closely related to the Pemba Sunbird *N. pembae*. Fishpool & Evans (2001) also include in this biome Scaly Babbler, although this babbler extends somewhat into the Somalia-Masai region.

The second biome represented (Somalia-Masai) is very marginal, with African

Orange-bellied Parrot (status in Kipini uncertain), White-bellied Go-away-bird (a vagrant), Forbes-Watson's Swift (a migrant), Long-tailed Fiscal (rare), Rufous Chatterer (rare), Golden Palm Weaver. Many more Somalia-Masai species appear a short way inland in the Garsen area, in thornbush.

Species of conservation concern

Three of the species listed above have been classified by BirdLife International (2012) as "Globally Endangered" (http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/country/kenya. Checked 8 November 2012): Madagascar Pond Heron, White-backed Vulture and Spotted Ground Thrush. Five more are treated as "Globally Vulnerable": White-headed Vulture, Greater Spotted Eagle, Madagascar Pratincole, Southern Ground Hornbill and White-winged Apalis.

Among others belonging to the Globally Threatened category of "Near-threatened" should be mentioned Southern Banded Snake Eagle and Malindi Pipit . Numbers of the Snake Eagle are certainly affected by the destruction of the Witu Extension forests, although it is widespread elsewhere in other forest and thicket types; it appears rare in coastal thickets. The Malindi Pipit occurs in a limited section of the coast between Ngomeni and Karawa (Britton 1980), as well as in the Tana River delta where it is said to be "less numerous" (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). Its habitat around Karawa and in the delta has shrunk or deteriorated with increasing human pressure. Its occurrence in Kipini Conservancy had never been documented: Kipini appears to be, in fact, the centre of distribution of this coastal endemic. Local concentrations of several dozen may occur and total numbers in the Conservancy must be in the order of thousands.

Many pairs of Saddle-billed Stork occur in the local *ziwa*s; we also found it common in the pans along the road between Witu and Garsen. This species is very uncommon elsewhere in Kenya and is treated as a Regionally Threatened species by Bennun & Njoroge (1999). There was, however, no sign of recent breeding activities and the recurrent droughts the region is suffering from are cause for concern.

On a regional level, one should also consider Black-and-white Flycatcher to be of conservation concern. Unfortunately, the status of the species at Kipini remains mysterious.

The isolated coastal population of Square-tailed Drongo is suffering throughout its small Kenyan range: about 80% of the riparian forests in the Tana River Primate Reserve are thought to have disappeared through deforestation (Butynski 1994, Wieczkowski & Mbora 2000, R. Hartley pers. comm.) and Witu F.R. suffers from much illegal logging.

Previous ornithological knowledge

Ornithologically this section of the northern coast of Kenya has remained virtually unexplored. There exist a few old collections from Witu and Kipini, e.g. Gustav Fischer passed through twice in the 1870s (Fischer & Reichenow 1878, 1879) and Frederick Jackson (1898) stayed in May–June and November 1891. The Arthur Blayney Percival collection contains a total of 68 specimens from the region (Witu, Kipini, Kao, Ngao) (see Bowen 1932); a second part of that paper with a detailed list was not published (N. Gilmore & E. Mathias *in litt.*), but a complete list of the Percival collection in the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia has generously been made available by N. Rice (*in litt.*). Examination of the ANSP collection shows that it was Norman

Percival Fenwick who in late 1919–early 1920 collected extensively along the lower Tana. In the next half century there was just the one visit to Witu incompletely documented (Britton & Britton 1970). To the south, the Tana River Delta has been visited briefly on occasion (e.g. Archer 1986; recent reports in *Bulletin of the African Bird Club*) and further inland the Primate Reserve received some attention (Andrews *et al.* 1975, Butynski 1994). There was a student expedition from Oxford University to the dry forests of Dodori and Boni to the north in 1961. Unfortunately, apart from a small paper on waders (Fogden 1963), results were never published, but an unpublished list of specimens collected in Boni for the Los Angeles County Museum in 1973 is available (Stager 1973). Njoroge *et al.* (2008) have provided a list of species reported from the Ishaqbini Community Conservancy in Ijara District, adjacent to the Primate Reserve.

Gazetteer

Anasa	2°31′S, 40°18′E
Bodhei	1°51′S, 40°43′E
Boni	1°40′S, 41°15′E
Bura	1°05′S, 39°56′E
Diani	4°18′S, 39°35′E
Formosa (Ungama) Bay	2°40′S, 40°20′E
Ganda forest, Kilifi dist.	3°13′S, 40°04′E
Garsen	2°16′S, 40°07′E
Gedi	3°18′S, 40°01′E
Hewani	2°15′S, 40°10′E
Ijara	1°36′S, 40°31′E
Karawa	2°38′S, 40°12′E
Kau	2°29′S, 40°26′E
Kidore, Tana R.	0°45′S, 39°45′E
Kilifi	3°38′S, 39°51′E
Kipini	2°32′S, 40°31′E
Kitere	1°57′S, 40°09′E
Kiunga	1°45′S, 41°29′E
Kosi, Tana R.	not traced
Kulesa, lower Tana	2°11′S, 40°01′E
Kwaihu (Kiweyu)	1°59′S, 41°18′E
Lamu	2°17′S, 40°55′E
Makeri	1°52′S, 40°07′E
Malindi	3°13′S, 40°07′E
Manda Is.	2°17′S, 40°57′E
Manda Mtoto	2°14′S, 40°59′E
Massa (Masabubu) Tana R.	1°12′S, 40°00′E
Mitole	2°08′S, 40°11′E
Mnazini	2°00′S, 40°09′E
Mombasa	4°03′S, 39°40′E
Momba Sasa, Tana R.	2°23′S, 40°32′E
Mongeya (Sokoke-Mongeya)	*c.* 3°20′S, 39°50′E
Mrima Hill	4°29′S, 39°16′E
Mundane range, Kiunga	1°48′S, 41°25′E

Muniumi	2°00′S, 40°12′E
Mwina, Tana R.	2°03′S, 40°04′E
Ngao	2°24′S, 40°12′E
Oda, lower Tana	2°28′S, 40°12′E
Oda Boda, Tana river	0°25′S, 39°35′E
Ozi (Ossi) River mouth	2°32′S, 40°31′E
Punewani (Shunewaya), Tana R.	2°23′S, 40°12′E
Sabaki	3°09′S, 40°08′E
Sangole	1°30′S, 40°36′E
Shakababo Lake	2°25′S, 40°11′E
Sherekiko (Sheriko)	2°39′S, 40°16′E
Shimba Hills	4°13′S, 39°25′E
Sokoke Forest	3°20′S, 39°50′E
Tana River mouth	2°32′S, 40°31′E
Tschara	2°33′S, 40°20′E
Wema	2°13′S, 40°11′E
Wenje, Tana R.	1°47′S, 40°06′E
Witu	2°22′S, 40°30′E

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Spring weights of some Palaearctic passerines in Ethiopia and Kenya: evidence for important migration staging areas in eastern Ethiopia

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Summary

Palaearctic migrants were trapped in late April and early May at a passage site near Jijiga in eastern Ethiopia. Willow Warblers *Phylloscopus trochilus* and Spotted Flycatchers *Muscicapa striata* were predominant, while Red-backed Shrikes *Lanius collurio*, Sedge Warblers *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*, Reed Warblers *A. scirpaceus*, Garden Warblers *Sylvia borin* and Common Whitethroats *S. communis* also featured prominently. Weights were high in all species, and over 70% of the birds caught were extremely fat. Spring weights and fat scores at Jijiga were compared with those found in the same species in Kenya, and the difference was striking. In Kenya, most species had mean spring weights 10–20% above lean weight; at Jijiga, species' mean weights ranged from 30% to 55% above lean weight. Whereas the reserves of most migrants departing from Kenya would have supported flights only as far as Ethiopia, the fat loads of birds at Jijiga indicated a potential for crossing Arabia with little need to feed. This suggests important staging and fattening grounds between these two areas, perhaps in the *Acacia–Commiphora* bushlands drained by the upper Juba and Shebelle rivers and their tributaries.

Introduction

Each year hundreds of millions of migrant passerines must set off from the Horn of Africa in April and early May on a crossing of the Arabian Peninsula (Moreau 1972). These are bound ultimately for Palaearctic breeding grounds distributed from Western Europe to Siberia and central Asia. They include birds which have wintered in northeast or east Africa as well as others which have already travelled thousands of kilometres from wintering grounds in southern parts of the continent. Many species cross Arabia rapidly in late April and May, and although desert conditions may be ameliorated locally by limited spring rainfall, this must present energy demands comparable with those of birds facing a spring crossing of the Sahara (e.g. Fry *et al.* 1970, Wood 1982), and require extensive pre-migratory fattening. Some high spring weights have been noted in Ethiopia (Ash 1993, 1994, Yohannes *et al.* 2009) but there have been no reports of concentrations of fat migrants preparing for take-off from The Horn. Further south, in Kenya, wintering departures and passage take place mainly in April, within a period of just three to four weeks (Pearson 1990, 1992). A few species, such as Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* (Pearson *et al.* 1979) and Great Reed Warbler *A. arundinaceus*, sometimes accumulate large fat loads at these equatorial latitudes, but the great majority of departing or passing migrants carry

only sufficient reserves to take them to refuelling areas in north-east Africa. Where are these important fattening grounds?

Numbers of passerine migrants on the coasts of Sudan and Eritrea during April-May appear to be unremarkable (e.g. Smith 1960, GN unpubl.). In Ethiopia, Ash (1980) noted some impressive concentrations of Willow Warblers *Phylloscopus trochilus* in late March–early April in the central Rift Valley, and *Sylvia* warblers trapped in April in southern and central parts of the Rift have included some very heavy birds (Ash 1994, and *in litt.*). But major spring transit areas probably lie further east. One likely clue to this was the discovery by Ash (1980, 1993) of mid-April concentrations of migrants in southeast Ethiopia, in an area of thorn bush southeast of Negelle at about 5° N, 40–41° E. The few birds that he trapped here included some Great Reed Warblers and Willow Warblers with high weights, but the proportion of heavy birds present was not large, suggesting that most needed to stay longer or move on quickly to fattening areas elsewhere. In late April 1995, HB, GN and DP joined John Ash in a search for Palaearctic migrants further north in eastern Ethiopia. Surveys near Aseita, in the Lake Awash area, proved disappointing, but 100 km to the southeast, near Jijiga, JA discovered a substantial passage and trapped fat migrants of several species.

In 1998, HB, GN and EY returned to the Jijiga site on 21 April and mist-netted continuously there until 3 May. A heavy passage of Palaearctic passerines was confirmed, and most birds trapped were found to have very high weights. Here we report the composition of this catch and give details of weights and fat scores. These are compared with spring data for the same species collected mainly by DP from passage sites in central and southeast Kenya.

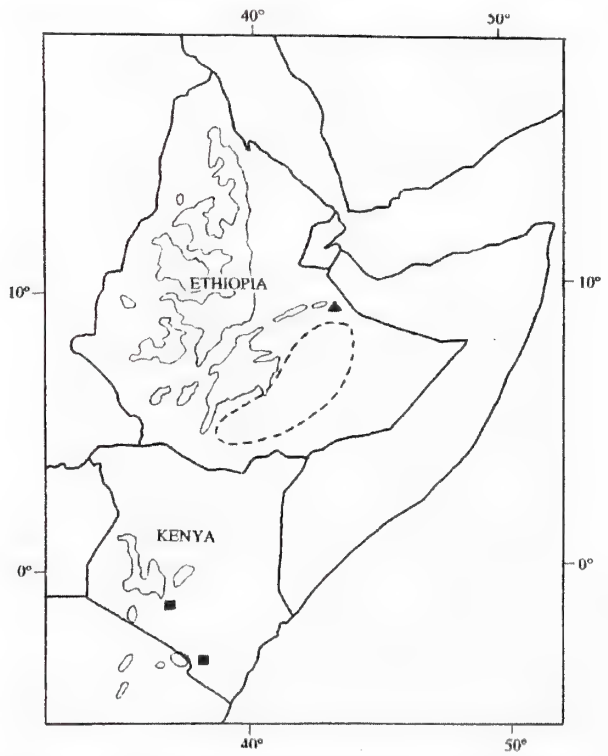

Figure 1. The Horn of Africa showing the location of the Jijiga ringing site (▲) and ringing areas in central and southeast Kenya (■). High ground over 2100 m is indicated. The likely Ethiopian fattening area is marked by a dashed line.

Methods and ringing sites

Jijiga (9°22′ N, 42°51′ E, 1600 m) is located in semi-arid country in eastern Ethiopia, to the north of the Ogaden region (Fig. 1). The study site was located about 15 km southeast of the town in an area of sparse bushy vegetation and acacia trees. Birds were mist-netted from early morning (05:00) until sunset. All were weighed to the nearest 0.1 g immediately after capture, using a digital pan balance, and were scored for visible fat following the procedure and 0–8 scale of Kaiser (1993).

The Kenya spring data given here were collected in April–early May from the Nairobi area and in April from Tsavo West National Park. Near Nairobi, birds were mist-netted in dry *Lantana–Acacia* scrub at Kariobangi (1°15′S, 36°50′E, 1600 m) on the eastern outskirts of

the city, and also in scrub, bush and ditches 25 km to the southeast at Athi River (1500 m). In Tsavo, birds were caught in semi-arid bush at Ngulia Lodge (3°00′S, 38°13′E, 900 m), mostly after attraction to lights at night. Birds were weighed to the nearest 0.1 g using a Pesola spring balance. Visible subcutaneous fat was scored on a 0–4 scale according to the appearance of the furcular pit. A score of *0* here (fat absent from the furcular pit) corresponds to *0* on the Kaiser scale; a score of *4* (furcular pit filled with fat and bulging) corresponds to *5* or above on the Kaiser scale, and is translated as such in Table 3 and the comparisons made below.

Species, weights and fat scores at Jijiga

A total of 647 Palaearctic migrants of 23 species was caught over the 12-day spring ringing session. Table 1 shows the composition of this catch.

Table 1. Numbers of each Palaearctic species caught, and numbers retrapped, at Jijiga, Ethiopia, 21 April–3 May 1998.

	New captures	Retraps
Hoopoe *Upupa epops epops*	4	0
Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*	45	4
Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*	5	0
River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*	2	1
Great Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*	11	3
Sedge Warbler *A. schoenobaenus*	24	2
Marsh Warbler *A. palustris*	11	0
Eurasian Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus*	38	4
Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*	2	0
Upcher's Warbler *H. languida*	1	0
Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*	303	19
Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*	1	0
Garden Warbler *S. borin*	26	1
Common Whitethroat *S. communis*	31	3
Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*	15	5
Common Nightingale *L. megarhynchos*	2	0
White-throated Robin *Irania gutturalis*	5	0
Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*	7	0
Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*	1	0
Common Rock Thrush *Monticola saxatilis*	1	0
Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*	109	12
Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*	2	0
Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*	2	0

Willow Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher dominated throughout. Red-backed Shrikes, Sedge Warblers, Reed Warblers, Garden Warblers and Common Whitethroats also featured prominently, while Great Reed Warblers, Marsh Warblers and Thrush Nightingales gave smaller but informative weight samples. Birds appeared to be moving quickly through the site for there were rather few retraps. The weights and visible fat scores of the ten main species are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Weights and fat scores of the main migrants trapped at Jijiga, April–May 1998.

Species	Weight				Fat score			
	n	mean	sd	range	n	mean	sd	% ≥ f5
Red-backed Shrike	40	33.3	4.9	23.1–41.7	41	4.5	1.8	86
Great Reed Warbler	11	37.6	4.9	32.0–46.2	11	6.3	1.3	91
Sedge Warbler	18	13.2	2.5	10.4–17.2	19	5.0	2.6	58
Marsh Warbler	11	16.2	2.2	10.8–18.7	11	6.4	1.8	91
Eurasian Reed Warbler	38	13.7	2.1	9.8–18.3	37	5.5	2.0	84
Willow Warbler	298	10.6	1.2	7.4–13.9	279	5.1	1.0	89
Garden Warbler	25	21.4	1.8	18.2–26.5	25	4.1	1.7	44
Common Whitethroat	31	19.1	1.9	14.0–22.2	30	5.9	1.1	87
Thrush Nightingale	15	32.9	3.9	22.5–38.3	15	6.3	1.4	93
Spotted Flycatcher	109	17.6	2.0	13.5–22.4	109	3.4	1.2	17

Mean weights and maximum weights were high in all these species (for comparisons see e.g. Cramp 1988, 1992, Cramp & Perrins 1993). The majority of birds were very fat. Seven of the ten species usually scored *fat 5–7* on the Kaiser scale. Only in Sedge Warbler, Garden Warbler, and most notably Spotted Flycatcher, were scores below *fat 5* commonly recorded. The high weights of some of the scarcer Jijiga species also deserve mention: 2 River Warblers, 22.7 and 27.0 g; 2 Icterine Warblers, 15.2 and 15.4 g; 2 Common Nightingales, 29.6 and 30.0 g; 7 Common Redstarts, 12.7–19.9 g (mean 15.8) and 1 Whinchat, 19.2 g.

Spring weights and lean weights in Kenya

For the ten main species above, Table 3 summarizes spring weights from central and southeast Kenya, and gives the percentage of birds at or above *fat 5* (Kaiser scale) for the sample sizes indicated. Some significant (mostly small) differences in spring fattening pattern have been found in Kenya between different sites and with different weather situations (see e.g. Pearson *et al.* 1979, Pearson 1992). However, the broad combined samples in Table 3 serve as a useful comparison with the Jijiga birds.

Table 3. Weights and prevalence of fat birds (score ≥5) in central and southeast Kenya, April–early May. N, data mainly or entirely from Nairobi/Athi River; T, data mainly from Tsavo; NT, data from both areas.

Species		Weight				Fat	
		n	mean	sd	range	n	% ≥ f5
Red-backed Shrike	NT	57	28.8	3.2	24.0–39.8	42	7
Great Reed Warbler	NT	84	32.0	5.1	24.6–45.7	65	12
Sedge Warbler	NT	643	11.9	1.8	9.1–21.0	321	8
Marsh Warbler	T	94	11.1	0.9	9.1–13.2	93	0
Eurasian Reed Warbler	N	537	11.1	1.1	8.5–15.8	331	2
Willow Warbler	NT	869	8.5	1.0	6.2–14.6	475	2
Garden Warbler	N	191	21.1	2.6	15.4–28.7	159	28
Common Whitethroat	NT	475	15.2	2.0	11.3–22.3	158	13
Thrush Nightingale	NT	87	24.9	3.1	18.8–36.8	66	5
Spotted Flycatcher	N	11	14.3	1.2	12.8–17.2	11	0

Some high maximum weights are shown, and the heaviest Great Reed Warblers, Sedge Warblers and Willow Warblers were about double the lean weight given in Table 4. But the proportion of Kenya spring birds with these massive fat loads was small. Moderate reserves were commonly carried (Kaiser *fat 3–4*), but many birds were quite lean. With the exception of Garden Warbler (28%), the proportion of each species scoring *fat 5* or above in these samples ranged from just 0 to 13%.

Table 4 lists mean weights (with number in sample and standard deviation) of birds caught in Kenya between November and April with a fat score of 0. These are taken as the 'lean weight' of the species concerned.

Table 4. Lean weights.

	(birds scoring f0, Kenya, Nov–Apr)		
	n	Mean	sd
Red-backed Shrike	407	24.6	1.6
Great Reed Warbler	15	26.8	2.2
Sedge Warbler	146	10.2	0.7
Marsh Warbler	2267	10.4	0.6
Eurasian Reed Warbler	51	10.1	0.5
Willow Warbler	384	7.7	0.7
Garden Warbler	105	16.9	1.1
Common Whitethroat	653	13.1	1.0
Thrush Nightingale	954	21.3	1.5
Spotted Flycatcher	315	13.3	0.9

Spring birds from Jijiga and Kenya compared

In all ten species the mean weight of birds at Jijiga was higher than that in Kenya. The difference ranged from just 0.3 g in Garden Warbler up to 8 g in Thrush Nightingale (Table 5). In all species except Garden Warbler and Sedge Warbler the difference was highly significant (p<0.1%).

Table 5. Differences of mean spring weight between Jijiga and Kenya and corresponding values of the t-statistic and probability level p.

	Difference ± SD	t	p
Red-backed Shrike	4.5 ± 0.88	5.1	<0.001
Great Reed Warbler	5.6 ± 1.57	3.6	<0.001
Sedge Warbler	1.3 ± 0.59	2.2	0.03
Marsh Warbler	5.1 ± 0.67	7.6	<0.001
Eurasian Reed Warbler	2.6 ± 0.34	7.6	<0.001
Willow Warbler	2.1 ± 0.08	27.3	<0.001
Garden Warbler	0.3 ± 0.41	0.7	0.47
Common Whitethroat	3.9 ± 0.35	11.1	<0.001
Thrush Nightingale	8.0 ± 1.07	7.5	<0.001
Spotted Flycatcher	3.3 ± 0.41	8.0	<0.001

At Jijiga, mean weights ranged from 30% above lean weight in Sedge Warbler to well over 50% higher in Thrush Nightingale and Marsh Warbler. In Kenya, by contrast, mean spring weights ranged between 7% above lean weight in Spotted Flycatcher and 24% in Garden Warbler.

Differences in visible fat levels between the two areas are even more striking. While 72% of the Jijiga birds scored *fat 5* or above (all ten species combined), the corresponding figure for the Kenya sample was just 7%. In all species except Garden Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher the higher proportion of these very fat birds at Jijiga was highly significant ($p < 0.1\%$).

Discussion

Migrant passerines setting off from wintering sites or spring transit sites in central or southern Kenya typically do so with low or moderate reserves of fat fuel. Some are close to lean weight on departure and perhaps proceed north via a series of short flights, with frequent pauses to feed. Many, however, are 20–30% above lean weight, with sufficient reserves to support 30–40 h of flight (for estimates see e.g. Pennycuick 1975, Alerstam 1990). This might involve three to four nights flying with little need to feed during daytime resting. Assuming a speed of 30–40 km/h (in still air) this should take them to fattening and staging areas 1000–1500 km further north.

The majority of spring passage birds caught at Jijiga were 30–60% above lean weight. This corresponds to a flight potential of 50–70 h, or, in still air, a flight range of 1500–3000 km. Such fat reserves should therefore be sufficient to take many of these birds across the Arabian desert with little or no need to feed. These high fat loads are similar to those recorded in migratory passerines preparing to cross the Sahara in West Africa (e.g. Smith 1966, Fry *et al.* 1970, Wood 1982). Despite high weights Spotted Flycatchers tended to record lower fat scores at Jijiga than other species. They may well tend to use a strategy of intermittent feeding on the crossing of Arabia, as they would appear to do on the southern autumn crossing of the Egyptian Sahara (Biebach 1985).

Most migrants heading north from Kenya must replenish their reserves in Ethiopia. At Jijiga, however, passage birds had already fattened extensively, nearby or to the south. This indicates important staging areas in eastern Ethiopia, which should probably be looked for east of the Bale Mountains (see Fig. 1). These may well lie in the *Acacia-Commiphora* bushlands drained by the upper Juba and Shebelle rivers and their tributaries. This region usually receives the bulk of its annual rainfall during March–May (Griffiths 1972; see also the online accessible resources of The World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal (http://sdwebx.worldbank.org/climate portal/index.cfm), and the flourishing of vegetation there typically coincides with the spring passage of Palaearctic migrants. Its likely importance has been underlined in recent experiments in which Red-backed Shrikes and Thrush Nightingales were tracked with light level geolocators. Birds paused for some days during their northward migration through eastern Africa, most apparently in southeast Ethiopia (Tøttrup *et al.* 2012).

Stopover and staging areas in north-east Africa appear to be utilized by most of the global population of some Palaearctic passerine species en route to and from their southern African winter quarters. The spring staging area indicated here is well separated from the autumn stopover area identified in eastern Sudan and/or western Ethiopia (Pearson *et al.* 1988), apparently a reflection of a geographic difference in seasonal rainfall pattern. In both seasons these areas are evidently more spatially restricted than many southern African wintering ranges. Their location and conservation should therefore be a priority in the protection of the migration routes and strategies of the species involved.

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A review of birds in Uganda: records updating the Uganda Atlas and notes on species unrecorded since 1980

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Introduction

This paper is the first update of the Ugandan avifauna since the publication of the *Bird Atlas of Uganda* (Carswell *et al.* 2005) and reviews the status of selected species. It lists eighteen additions to the Uganda list since 2005, some the result of range expansion, but others revealed by advances in identification and technology. Secondly it deals with eight species which were listed in the Atlas in Appendix 1. These had been added provisionally to the list between 2000 and 2005 but some were then still under review by the East African Rarities Committee (EARC). Thirdly, it deals with species known before 1980 then not recorded again until after publication of the Atlas. Finally, it summarizes details of species known before 1980 but not recorded since.

Additions to the Uganda list since publication of the Atlas

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*

An adult was photographed and identified by Dick Forsman at Murchison Falls National Park on 15 December 2009. A full description has been provided and a photograph appears in *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 17(2), 2010. Accepted by the EARC. Although a few sight records had been reported previously, no descriptions were received and the species was not on the Uganda list.

Eleonora's Falcon *Falco eleonorae*

The Atlas gives an unsubstantiated record from Kidepo in 1972. Recent studies using satellite transmitters attached to captured birds have confirmed that this species occurs in Uganda. An adult trapped on 17 September 2007 on Mallorca, Spain, was tracked using satellite telemetry through Libya, Chad and Sudan, then into Uganda on its journey south to the wintering area in Madagascar (López-López *et al.* 2009). In 2008, four birds trapped in Greece in October were followed on their journey south. One of these was tracked flying over south-west Uganda.

Grey-throated Rail *Canirallus oculeus*

Urban Olsson was able to identify and sound record two individuals.in Semliki National Park on 21–22 July 1996. This record was accepted by the EARC. Two earlier records from the same area are catalogued in the Atlas but with no supporting details.

Wattled Crane *Bugeranus carunculatus*

On 2 May 2009 one was located at Kibimba Rice Scheme by Sarah Nachuha Kasozi in a flock of Grey Crowned Cranes *Balearica regulorum*. She contacted Achilles Byaruhanga who photographed the bird next day. It remained until at least 26 June. A

photograph is published on the *Nature*Uganda website (http://www.natureuganda.org/). Accepted by the EARC.

White-crowned Plover *Vanellus albiceps*

On 10 July 2003 a bird was discovered by Dave Richards on the River Nile in Murchison Falls National Park (see *Scopus* 26: 48-49). Accepted by the EARC. Further records from the same site involved a pair in January 2004, a pair with small chicks on 6 July 2006, and then subsequent annual reports. The species is evidently consolidating its position.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

On 15 February 2007 six birds were identified by Allan Kirby on grassy flats bordering reed beds near the Ishasha River in Queen Elizabeth National Park. A full description and photographs were taken (see *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 15: 98-99). Accepted by the EARC. A second record on 1 January 2009 involved four birds at the same site.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*

On 8 December 2010 a knot species found by the author at Lutembe Lagoon was suspected to be a Great Knot *C. tenuirostris*. Some poor and inconclusive photographs were taken, but better ones were obtained by Achilles Byaruhanga on 20 December 2010 and these conclusively confirmed the species, an addition to the Uganda list. The bird was still present on 5 January 2011, but was not seen subsequently. Accepted by the EARC (for more details see pages 84–85 in this issue).

White-eyed Gull *Larus leucophthalmus*

An adult in summer plumage was observed at Lutembe Lagoon on 22 November 2002 by Malcolm Wilson, Chris Sharpe, Ian Kerton, Barry Williams and Nathan Eluku. It was seen with a few Grey-headed Gulls *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* and about 40 Lesser Black-backed Gulls *L. fuscus*. A full description was taken and the record has been added to the Uganda list. Accepted by the EARC.

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*

An adult was discovered in Murchison Falls National Park on 8 June 2011 by Jonathan Rossouw. It was resting on mud flats with a small flock of Grey-headed Gulls, Gull-billed Terns *Gelochelidon nilotica* and a single Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* at the confluence of the River Nile and Lake Albert. A splendid image was published in *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 19: 108. Accepted by the EARC.

Black Tern *Childonias niger*

A first-winter bird was identified and photographed by Dick Forsman at the Kasinga Channel in Queen Elizabeth National Park on 8 December 2009. It was present in a flock of several hundred White-winged Black Terns *C. leucopterus*. A photograph is published in *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 17(2). Accepted by the EARC. The main migration of Black Terns is along the West coast of Africa to wintering areas in Namibia.

Fischer's Lovebird *Agapornis fischeri*

First noted at Entebbe Botanical Gardens on 14 Jan 2006, since when further records have come from Gaba, with a single bird on 5 December 2010, three on 3 March 2011,

and a pair on 20 March 2011. Its status as a wild bird is clouded by escapes from captivity.

Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachycoccyx audeberti*

The first accepted record was a bird described from Lake Mburo National Park on 29 March 2000 by Charlie Williams. Accepted by the EARC. Further records from the same site involved a displaying bird on 24 March 2006 and another single bird on 2 September 2007. An earlier record from Murchison Falls National Park has not been substantiated.

Yellow Penduline Tit ***Anthoscopus parvulus***

First documented for Uganda when Guillaume Passavy discovered two individuals on 11 June 2009 in the vicinity of Rhino Camp at Balala Swamp, Arua District. A full description was submitted and accepted by the EARC. It has since been recorded several times in Murchison Falls National Park by Pete Morris, and most recently on the south side of the River Nile at Red Chili camp where a pair was recorded by the author on 25 October 2010. This inconspicuous species has presumably been overlooked.

Boran Cisticola ***Cisticola bodessa***

In June 2011 Sheila Taylor realized on regular walks that cisticola song changed in character from that of the regular Rattling Cisticola *C. chiniana* as she ascended Mt Moroto. She sound recorded the song and calls of the birds concerned and concluded that they matched those of Boran Cisticola. These recordings and a description were submitted to the EARC and the species was accepted onto the Uganda list.

Southern Black Flycatcher ***Melaenornis pammelaina***

There are several recent reports from Lake Mburo National Park, including a pair on 25 July 2002, a pair with a juvenile 6 February 2003 and three birds on 5 February 2004. The author observed a "shiny" Black Flycatcher there on 12 February 2010, and then a pair from 5 to 7 March 2010 , including a singing male. Accepted by the EARC.

Collared Flycatcher ***Ficedula albicollis***

An immaculate male was photographed by Phil Palmer in the Kasenyi area of Queen Elizabeth National Park on 10 March 2006. Accepted by the EARC. The Atlas states, "There have been published records for *F. albicollis* from Uganda, but the position is confused (with *F. semitorquata*) and it has not been reliably reported."

Golden-naped Weaver ***Ploceus aureonucha***

On 1 August 2006 a group led by Malcolm Wilson discovered two unidentified "nuthatch" Weavers in Semliki National Park; they appeared to be a pair. After examining photographs made available by the American Museum of Natural History, the Vienna Naturhistorische Museum and the Stockholm Natural History Museum, they identified the birds as Golden-naped Weavers. This record was published in the *Bulletin of the African Bird Club Bulletin* 14: 200–202, and was accepted by the EARC. A second record by Herbert Byaruhanga, again from Semliki National Park, involved a female on 16 June 2009. As this species was previously known only from the Ituri Forest in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, these Semliki records extend the range eastwards by 80 km.

Blue-capped Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus cyanocephalus*

A pair was found in the Moroto region of Karamoja on 4 September 2011 by the author and Michael Opigi. The birds were present in degraded *Acacia* thornbush, habitat similar to that in which the species occurs in neighbouring Kenya, so its discovery was not so surprising. Accepted by the EARC.

Additions to the Uganda list confirmed between January 2000 and 2005

These were all listed within Appendix 1 of the Atlas.

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

The Atlas gives a poorly documented record from the west bank of the Nile at Laropi on 2 April 1948. There were no other records until a bird was seen at Kibimba rice scheme on 20 November 2002 by Malcolm Wilson, Chris Sharpe, Ian Kerton and Barry Williams (see also *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 12: 47). Accepted by the EARC.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*

A record of three birds at Moroto in May 1966 was considered by Pearson & Turner (1986) as unsubstantiated. The species was accepted for the Uganda list when a bird was recorded at Murchison Falls National Park on 4 October 2000 by Malcolm Wilson. Accepted by the EARC.

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*

This Palaearctic species is listed for Kidepo Valley National Park but no documentation is available so that a bird seen at Moroto on 7 January 2001 by Malcolm Wilson is the first acceptable record. Accepted by the EARC.

Southern Carmine Bee-eater *Merops nubicoides*

The Atlas gives a record from Lake Mburo on 20 July 1998, when this was considered to be a subspecies of Carmine Bee-eater *M. nubicus*. It was recorded again in Murchison Falls National Park on 17 July 2003, by Brian Finch and group. Two birds were found among a party of about 20 Northern Carmine Bee-eaters and photographs were published in the *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 15(1).

Ansorge's Greenbul *Andropadus ansorgei*

The only acceptable record involves a bird seen on 2 August 2001 at Buhoma in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park by Nik Borrow (see *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 9: 140–141). Accepted by the EARC. The nominate race *ansorgei* breeds discontinuously from Sierra Leone to the Democratic Republic of Congo, while the subspecies *kavirondensis* breeds in Western Kenya. The lack of Uganda records is perhaps due to confusion with the more widespread Little Grey Greenbul *A. gracilis*.

Pale Wren Warbler *Calamonastes undosus*

On 19 September 2000 one was discovered in grass and acacia scrub in Lake Mburo National Park by Malcolm Wilson and party (see *Scopus* 23: 44–45). It is known across the border in North-West Tanzania, so its arrival was not unexpected, but to date this is the only Uganda record. Accepted by EARC.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Added to the Uganda list in November 2001 when a small party was found at Kibimba

rice scheme by Malcolm Wilson. The species has since consolidated its range and is now found throughout most towns and villages of Uganda, with records received from the north-west, south-west, south, east and central regions. Indeed, only the far north-east has yet to provide records.

Orange-cheeked Waxbill *Estrilda melpoda*

The first Uganda record of this West African species involved eight birds found in Semliki National Park on 26 December 2002 by David Gee and Fay Enright. Accepted by the EARC. This was followed by a sighting in the same area on 7 June 2003 by K.D. Dijkstra and Godfrey Bakyesiima, and then further records in 2005, 2006 and January 2011.

Species known from before 1980, and for which there are recent post-Atlas records

Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori*

There are two or three old records, the last from Kidepo in 1966. Recent evidence has shown the species as still present in Kidepo. A fine photograph was taken there by Byekwaso Blasio on 24 May 2010 and a single bird was seen by Lotuk Benard in April 2011.

Egyptian Plover *Pluvianus aegyptius*

Included in the Atlas on the strength of two specimens from the Achwa River on the Uganda-Sudan border, the first undated, the second collected on 9 December 1913 (Jackson & Sclater 1938). There are several recent records of single birds from the River Nile in Murchison Falls National Park. Photographs have been published—the most recent taken on 13 March 2011 by John Lofgreen, and which appears on the *Nature*Uganda website.

Forbes's Plover *Charadrius forbesi*

One was photographed at Lake Nabugabo on 27 May 2010 by Fred Hodgson. Accepted by the EARC. This was the fourth record for Uganda, the third having come from the same site on 20 February 1971. The following year (2011) an adult was recorded at the same site by the author and Ian Little.

Greater Sandplover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

A bird found and identified by the author at Entebbe on 4 September 2010, and photographed together with a Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* and a Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, represents the second Ugandan record. Accepted by the EARC. The first record was from Entebbe Airport on 25 September 1966 (Pearson 1972).

Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*

There have been several recent reports from Kidepo Valley National Park, and near Moroto, the most recent concerning two birds flushed in the park by the author on 25 April 2011 (see *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 18(2)). Old records from Karamoja are given by Jackson (1926) and Jackson & Sclater (1938).

African Barred Owlet *Glaucidium capense*

A group led by Harriet Kemigisha had excellent views of a bird in the Semliki Valley on 24 January 2011. A full description has been received. This represents only the

second record for Uganda, the first involving a female collected at Ntandi in the Bwamba Forest, Semliki Valley on 8 December 1968 (Friedmann & Williams 1971).

Red-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus atroflavus*

There have been several recent records from Semliki Valley, including a report by Phil Gregory (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 18(2)). The Atlas gives records from Bwamba Forest in 1963 and Ntandi in 1967.

African Piculet *Sasia africana*

Records from Semliki include a report by Phil Gregory (*Bulletin of the African Bird Club* 18(2)) and most recently by Harriet Kemigisha and group of two pairs on 24 January 2011. These are the first since the earlier records, all from Bwamba in the 1960s.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Birds were trapped and ringed by the author at Gaba on 19 November 2010 and 20 March 2011. Five birds trapped at the same site between 19 November and 2 December 1967 (Pearson 1972) and one trapped there on 4 December 2000 by Malcolm Wilson represent the only other unequivocal Uganda records.

Black-backed Cisticola *Cisticola eximius*

Records in recent years from grasslands in Murchison Falls National Park have included those from the warden, this author and Derek Pomeroy. Apart from an anonymous Murchinson Falls National Park report this species had not been recorded in Uganda since Jackson & Sclater wrote in 1938.

Rock-loving Cisticola *Cisticola aberrans*

There are recent records from Kidepo Valley National Park, with sightings and photographic evidence by the author, Achilles Byaruhanga and Harriet Kemigisha from 2010 and 2011. There was just one earlier record, also from Kidepo (Elliott, 1972).

Red-fronted Warbler *Spiloptila rufifrons*

Confirmed as being present in Kidepo Valley National Park, most recently by the author on 25 April 2011. The only older record involves a bird seen in Karamoja in November 1965 (Mann 1971).

Pale Prinia *Prinia somalica*

Seen by the author in Kidepo Valley National Park on 17–20 January 2010 and 25 April 2011 . Otherwise known only from a single bird collected on Mt Moroto in 1963 (Friedmann 1966).

Chapin's Flycatcher *Muscicapa lendu*

There have been several recent records from Bwindi Impenetrable National Forest. Otherwise known in Uganda from a single bird collected in Bwindi in 1960 (Keith & Twomey 1968).

Orange Tufted Sunbird *Cinnyris bouvieri*

Recorded fairly regularly in recent years. It was considered scarce in the Atlas which could report no records since 1972.

Cut-throat Finch *Amadina fasciata*

A bird was photographed in Kidepo Valley National Park in March 2010, and three

birds were seen there on 25 April 2011. Considered rare and local by the Atlas which mentions records from Kidepo in August 1966.

Notes on species recorded in Uganda before 1980 but not since

Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*
Rare with just two records, from Queen Elizabeth Natinoal Park January 1969 and Muko, Kabale, January 1970.

Cape Teal *Anas capensis*
Square-bracketed in the Atlas as unproven, but a record by Chapin (1932) of three birds at Katwe near Lake Edward in January 1927 appears to have been overlooked.

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*
Now very scarce. Birds were shot in western Uganda at Lake Nakivali in November 1925 and at Lake Mogishu in December 1938, and there were sight records from Queen Elizabeth National Park in January 1966, December 1969 and (up to 4) during December/January 1970/71 (Pearson & Turner 1986).

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*
The only definite record is from Butiaba, Lake Albert, on 13 November 1901 (Jackson 1926).

Maccoa Duck *Oxyura maccoa*
The Atlas gives only three records, all before 1935; at the north end of Lake Kyoga, on Lake Bunyonyi and at Lake Kayumba where a male was collected on 20 November 1933.

Chestnut-flanked Goshawk *Accipiter castanilius*
A single male was collected in Bwamba Forest on 1 April 1963 (Friedmann 1966).

Shelley's Francolin *Francolinus shelleyi*
The only record is of three females collected at Murema, south-west Uganda, by Doggett in April 1903, now in the Natural History Museum, Tring.

Orange River Francolin *Francolinus levaillantoides*
Few Uganda records. Seen on Mt Moroto in 1913, and three birds were collected there in May 1963 (Friedmann 1966). Then seen in hilly country in Kidepo Valley National Park in August 1966 (Elliott 1972).

Little Crake *Porzana parva*
The sole record is of four females collected by G.F. Archer, with three others seen, in a swamp near Butiaba on 6 December 1901 (Jackson & Sclater 1938).

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*
There is a single old record of one at Entebbe on 20 March 1915 (Meinertzhagen 1922).

Pallas's or Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*
The only record is of a first summer bird that remained at Entebbe between 16 April and 25 September 1966 (Pearson 1971, Mann 1971).

Lesser Crested Tern ***Sterna bengalensis***
Known only from a sight record from Entebbe dated 6 August 1950 which was accepted by Britton & Brown (1974).

Eurasian Scops Owl ***Otus scops***
Known from a few specimens collected between Kampala and Jinja early last century (van Someren 1916, 1932, Jackson & Sclater 1938). A report from West Nile in April 1966 is unsubstantiated.

Bates's Nightjar ***Caprimulgus batesi***
There are just three definite Uganda records of this Central African rain forest species, the last being a bird collected at Nkarara (now in Semliki National Park) in July 1967 (Friedmann & Williams 1968).

Pallid Swift ***Apus pallidus***
Due to confusion with other swifts this species is undoubtedly overlooked. A bird collected at Mt Moroto and assigned to the race *brehmorum* represents the only reliable record (Pearson & Turner 1986).

Southern Ground Hornbill ***Bucorvus leadbeateri***
The Atlas gives just two old specimen records from south-east Uganda as definite: Bosoga November 1984 (Jackson 1902) and Mudama (Jackson & Sclater 1938).

Singing Bush-Lark ***Mirafra cantillans***
The Atlas mentions specimens collected at Kumi, April 1913, and Soroti, November 1917, and it was recorded in Kidepo Valley National Park in August 1966 (Elliott 1972). Other more recent records have been received, but with insufficient supporting detail.

Pink-breasted Lark ***Mirafra poecilosterna***
The Atlas gives a single record, a male collected north of Moroto in January 1913.

Chestnut-backed Sparrow-Lark ***Eremopterix leucotis***
Recorded early last century from Mt Moroto and Mt Napak (van Someren 1921, 1922), and listed anonymously for Kidepo Valley National Park.

Tawny Pipit ***Anthus campestris***
The only record is of a bird feeding with Yellow Wagtails *Motacilla flava* at Entebbe on 4 December 1966 (Pearson 1972).

Sassi's Olive Greenbul ***Phyllastrephus lorenzi***
The only record is of a specimen collected in the Bwamba Lowlands in Semliki on 17 June 1967 (Friedmann & Williams 1968).

Yellow-throated Nicator ***Nicator vireo***
Three were collected in Bwamba Forest in July 1945 (van Someren & van Someren 1949) and several more specimens subsequently (Friedmann 1966, Friedmann & Williams 1971). Although recent sight records have been reported from Semliki no descriptions have been offered.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*
The Atlas gives just two specimen records, both from Moroto in 1917: one in January (van Someren 1921), the other, in December, examined at the American Museum of Natural History and bearing a Meinertzhagen & Turner label.

Forest Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas leucosticta*
Known from a single bird collected in Bwamba Forest on 23 July 1960 (Keith & Twomey 1968). Recent reports from Semliki Valley have not been accompanied by adequate description.

Rufous Bush Chat *Cercotrichas galactotes*
The only record is of a bird seen in Kidepo Valley National Park on 15 October 1969 by A.P. Zeigler (Pearson & Turner 1986).

Capped Wheatear *Oenanthe pileata*
There were confirmed records in the 1960s from the West Nile region (J. Mackenzie-Grieves) and from the Queen Elizabeth National Park (see Britton 1980).

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*
One was collected at Mweya in Queen Elizabeth National Park on 24 November 1970 by M.P.L. Fogden (Pearson & Turner 1986).

Upcher's Warbler *Hippolais languida*
The only satisfactory records are from the southeast. Birds were trapped and ringed at Kachong'a and Lake Bisina in late March 1971; another was seen at Lake Bisina on 2 April 1972 (Rolfe & Pearson 1973).

Turner's Eremomela *Eremomela turneri*
A specimen collected in the 1930s from Nyondo Forest, Kigezi, on the Uganda/ Democratic Republic of Congo border (Jackson & Sclater 1938) is the only record.

Common Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*
Found to be common in the Cheptui and Chebonnet valleys of northwest Elgon between December and March 1971–1972, mainly at 2500–3000 m. Two were also trapped and ringed on 19 December 1971 at Lake Bisina, thought to be on passage (Rolfe & Pearson 1973). There appear to have been no records since, although a Finnish-ringed bird was recovered in central Uganda on 29 December 1976 (Dowsett *et al.* 1988).

Southern Hyliota *Hyliota australis*
The only record concerns a pair of the race *slatini* collected at Hakitengya in the Semliki Valley in October 1946 (van Someren & van Someren 1949).

Wailing Cisticola *Cisticola lais*
Known only from Mt Moroto where it was collected by Lynes (1930) and six more specimens (including three juveniles) were taken in May 1963 (Friedmann 1966).

Grey-headed Batis *Batis orientalis*
Because of confusion with Black-headed Batis *B. minor*, the only unequivocal record is of a male collected on Mt Moroto on 12 May 1963 (Friedmann 1966).

Spotted Creeper *Salpornis spilonotus*

The only records concern a pair of the race *salvadori* collected at Sebei, Mt Elgon, in February 1890 (Sharpe 1891) and birds of the race *emini* in Arua district (Jackson & Sclater 1938).

Fiery-breasted Bushshrike *Malaconotus cruentus*

Several specimens were collected from the Bwamba lowlands in the Semliki Forest between 1957 and the late 1960s (Williams 1957, Friedmann 1966, Friedmann & Williams 1968). It has not been recorded since.

Red-eyed Puffback *Dryoscopus angolensis*

Seen and collected in Bwamba lowlands July–September 1944 (van Someren & van Someren 1949), and collected again there in November 1971 (Friedmann & Williams 1971).

Red-bellied Malimbe *Malimbus erythrogaster*

The only definite record concerns a specimen collected from Bwamba Forest in the Semliki Valley (van Someren & van Someren 1949). Reports from Budongo Forest remain unsubstantiated.

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The Kavirondo Escarpment: a previously unrecognized site of high conservation value in Western Kenya

James Bradley and David Bradley

Summary

In western Kenya, extant woodland habitats and their representative bird species are increasingly scarce outside of protected areas. With the assistance of satellite imagery we located several minimally impacted ecosystems on the Kavirondo Escarpment (0°1.7′ S, 34°56.5′ E), which we then visited to examine the vegetation communities and investigate the avifauna. Despite only a limited effort there, we report several new atlas square occurrences, presence of the local and poorly known Rock Cisticola *Cisticola emini* and a significant range extension for the Stone Partridge *Ptilopachus petrosus*. Our short visits indicate high avian species richness is associated with the escarpment and we suggest comprehensive biodiversity surveys here are warranted.

Introduction

The Kavirondo Escarpment in central-west Kenya is a significant geologic and topographic feature. It straddles the equator, extending over 45 km from east to west, and comprises the northern fault line escarpment of the Kavirondo Rift Valley (Baker *et al.* 1972). Immediately to the south lie the lowlands of the Lake Victoria Basin and Nyando River Valley, and to the north, the high plateau of the western Kenya highlands (Fig. 1). The escarpment slopes range in elevation from 1200–1700 m at the western end to 1500–2000 m in the east, where it gradually merges with the Nandi Hills. Numerous permanent and seasonal drainages on the escarpment greatly increase the extent of land surface and variation in slope gradients, as well as the richness of vegetation communities. These include humid gallery forest in drainages, open woodland on slopes, and areas of low dense bush at lower elevations. Some prominent tree genera represented on the central and eastern areas of the escarpment include *Acacia*, *Terminalia*, *Erythrina* and *Combretum*, while small shrubs, large boulders and scree slopes characterise much of the terrain towards the western end.

The Kavirondo Escarpment is situated close to popular and historic birding locations in the Nyando Valley such as Ahero, Awasi and Nyarondo, and to the South Nandi Forest in the Nandi Hills. Despite this, very little appears to be known of its avifauna although the western end, sometimes known as the Maragoli Escarpment, was noted as a site for Ring-necked Francolin by Frederick Jackson over 100 years ago (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

To assess the escarpment's birding potential we visited three different locations in a total of four short visits (2–4 hours each); 20 Jan 2011, 18 Feb 2012 (twice) and 19 Feb 2012. Although the escarpment extends across three atlas squares (60B, 61A and 49C; Lewis & Pomeroy 1989), all the locations we visited are situated in atlas square 60B, at elevations between 1350–1650 m. Below, we provide notes on: a) species observed of interest, and b) species for which the observation represents a new atlas square

occurrence, or new post-1970 occurrence as mapped by Lewis & Pomeroy (1989). All further comments on species distributions are based on Lewis & Pomeroy (1989) unless noted otherwise.

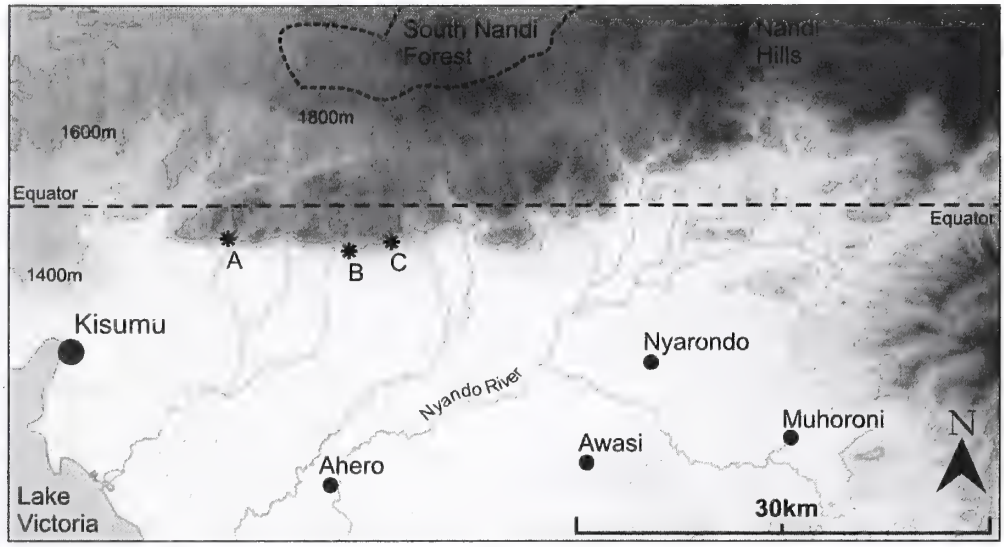

Figure 1. Map showing the Kavirondo Escarpment dividing the highlands of Western Kenya and the lowlands of the Kavirondo Rift Valley and Winam Gulf, Lake Victoria. Asterisks indicate the three sites visited: A) 18 Feb 2012 (1 hour of observations), B) 20 Jan 2011 and 18 Feb 2012 (4 hours combined), C) 19 Feb 2012 (4 hours). Darker shading represents higher elevations and contours shown are for 1400 m, 1600 m and 1800 m.

Species Accounts

[Stone Partridge *Ptilopachus petrosus*]

On the evening of 18 Feb 2012 while attempting to record the calls of African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata*, we inadvertently recorded the calls of a gallinaceous-sounding bird near the western end of the escarpment. Reviewing our audio files subsequently, we and other colleagues have thought that these short background calls are possibly those of Stone Partridge. The habitat on the escarpment appears suitable for this species, and this record, probably of resident birds, would represent a noteworthy range extension and the furthest south to date, being 150 km from the nearest known population on the Kongelai Escarpment (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). Bearing in mind this species' secretive nature during much of the year, it may well have been overlooked elsewhere [nearby] and targeted searches may reveal its presence in similar rocky habitat in the Maseno, Adungosi and Malaba areas (B. Finch, pers. comm.).

Western Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus cinarescens*

Two adults were seen well and a third was heard calling in mature woodland at two different locations. This is a scarce and local species in Kenya (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996), which may be declining at this site as woodland habitat is cleared for charcoal production.

Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*

A single independent juvenile of this globally Near-Threatened species (Birdlife

International 2013) was seen well soaring westwards along the upper reaches of the escarpment. There are no previous records from this atlas square although there are several probable breeding records from nearby areas.

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus*

Five birds were seen well, whilst foraging together at 1500 m prior to a heavy, late afternoon thunderstorm. They were identified by their similarity to Common Swift *A. apus* but with a blacker appearance and a white throat contrasting strongly with a dark forehead. This is a local species of highland areas in western Kenya (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996) but is unrecorded from this atlas square.

Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater *Merops oreobates*

Several pairs were seen in open woodland at mid-elevations on the escarpment. This species, restricted to the East Africa Highlands Biome (Bennun & Njoroge 1999), is known in this atlas square from pre-1970 records only, though it may well be resident here.

Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis*

Two individuals were seen at two sites in bushy woodland. There is no record from this atlas square although it may be fairly common here and merely overlooked. It is typically found to the north of the equator (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996), though we have seen it south of here in the nearby Nyando Valley, as well as at Kericho.

Red-shouldered Cuckooshrike *Campephaga phoenicea*

On 18 Feb 2012 we observed and recorded a single female in open woodland at 1450 m where it called for an extended period of time from the top of a mostly leafless tree. While time constraints prevented us from studying the bird closely so as to visually distinguish it from the Black Cuckooshrike *C. flava*, our recordings closely match online recordings of this species but not those of Black Cuckooshrike. This is a very infrequently reported species in Kenya, where it is known from the far west only. There are pre-1970 records from this atlas square, though it is known more recently from nearby Kakamega (Pearson & Turner 1998) and Kaimosi (C. Mann, pers. comm.).

Rock Martin *Ptyonoprogne fuligula*

This widespread species is probably fairly common on the escarpment, with small numbers observed in two locations. Although generally not resident across most of the Lake Victoria Basin, the absence of previous records from this atlas square is probably a reflection of low observer effort in suitable habitat.

Singing Cisticola *Cisticola cantans*

A pair was audio-recorded duetting from thicket and forest edge at 1500 m. There are no previous records from this atlas square, although the species is common in nearby highland areas.

Whistling Cisticola *Cisticola lateralis*

Family groups were observed and tape-recorded in two different locations in open woodland and ravine thicket. In Kenya, this is a local and uncommon species found in the far west only, where it reaches the eastern edge of its continental range. It has been reported at nearby Kakamega (Pearson & Turner 1998) and although previously

unrecorded in this atlas square, it is probably resident at this site where there is suitable habitat.

Rock Cisticola *Cisticola aberrans*

A single individual was seen briefly but well at 1450 m, firstly on a boulder and then in a small shrub. Our field notes at the time describe the bird as follows: an unstreaked and clean looking, prinia-like cisticola, uniform sandy-buff below and darker brown above; crown a contrasting rufous; tail quite long and cocked. Although we did not note the pale supercilium described in field guides, it seems possible that we could have missed this feature during our brief views. In Kenya, this is a very poorly known species of boulder slopes and rocky hills, previously known west of the Rift Valley only from the Oloololo Escarpment in the northwest Maasai Mara (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). The subspecies there, *C. a. emini*, may well be the same as that which we report here, although our experience with the species is insufficient to make that determination.

Little Greenbul *Andropadus virens*

Known in this atlas square from pre-1970 records only, this vocal species appeared to be common and was heard singing from several ravines with good tree cover and a thick understorey.

Yellow-bellied Hyliota *Hyliota flavigaster*

A pair was seen well and photographed in open woodland at 1400 m on 20 Jan 2011. This is a very scarce and local species in Kenya, only occurring west of the Rift valley and with most records falling in the June–August period (Lewis & Pomeroy 1989). It is previously unrecorded from this atlas square, although there are old records from nearby areas of Fort Ternan and Kericho (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996), 45 km and 50 km to the south-east respectively.

Green-capped Eremomela *Eremomela scotops*

A pair of the subspecies *E.s. citriniceps* was seen well and photographed in open, grassed woodland at 1400 m, where they foraged primarily in small acacia trees. This is a scarce and local species in Kenya, the nearest known site also situated in atlas square 60B, at Kendu Bay, from where there are pre-1970 records only. The Kavirondo Escarpment represents a 50 km north-easterly extension of range and only the second known area where it overlaps with its largely allopatric sister species, the Green-backed Eremomela *E. canescens*, which is known from the Muhoroni area in the adjacent Nyando Valley (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

Grey-winged Robin *Sheppardia polioptera*

A single individual was seen well along the margins of dense understorey and gallery forest in a spring-fed drainage. There are no previous records from this atlas square although it is locally common in the nearby Nandi Hills.

Familiar Chat *Cercomela familiaris*

A single individual was seen briefly but well, in fairly dense and humid bush at 1350 m. We ruled out the possibility of a female Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, by its larger size and greyer colouration. This species is local and infrequently reported in Kenya, being more numerous in the north, in rocky, bushed habitat similar to that

on the Kavirondo Escarpment. It is previously unrecorded from this atlas square, although there are both pre- and post-1970 records from several nearby areas.

Little Rock Thrush *Monticola rufocinereus*

Two counter-singing males and a pair were seen at two different locations, both at 1500 m. This local and uncommon species, restricted to the East African Highlands Biome (Bennun & Njoroge 1999), is previously unrecorded from this atlas square although it may be resident here in small numbers.

Olive-bellied Sunbird *Cinnyris chloropygius*

Previously unrecorded from this atlas square, although known to occur at nearby Kisumu and Koru (pers. obs.), a single male was seen well in dense thicket and ravine woodland at 1350 m. This is a locally common species in far Western Kenya, occurring here at the very eastern edge of its continental range (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*

A single bird was seen well in bushed grassland on steep rocky ground at 1450 m. Though previously unrecorded in this atlas square, it is known to be a widespread species at low densities and possibly overlooked (Lewis & Pomeroy 1989).

Discussion

Biogeographically, the Kavirondo Escarpment exhibits similarities with other escarpment avifaunas in Western Kenya and in particular the Oloololo Escarpment in the north-west Maasai Mara 130 km to the south. Species of note shared between the latter site and the Kavirondo Escarpment include Rock Cisticola, Yellow-bellied Hyliota, Green-capped Eremomela, Familiar Chat and Long-billed Pipit. The presence of such local and infrequently recorded species here is a testament to the integrity of the indigenous vegetation communities that remain, although these are certainly exposed to considerable anthropogenic pressure.

The human population both below and above the slopes is high, and while the rocky terrain is largely unsuitable for farming, a number of other activities appear to be causing a gradual denuding and degradation of vegetation cover. In particular, the production of charcoal is highly destructive, with tree felling preceded by annual/semi-annual dry season burning and livestock grazing. Populations of woodland birds in particular are likely at risk from this disturbance. However, while woodland habitat remains, we can recommend this site as a very productive birding location worthy of further study and surveys, in particular to establish the continued presence of Ring-necked Francolin.

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Short communications

Observations on the trend of the Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* at breeding colonies, eastern Uganda

The Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* occurs in sub-Saharan Africa, Madagascar and the southern Red Sea (del Hoyo *et al.* 1992). It has an extremely large range with a relatively stable population, making its conservation status of least concern (BirdLife 2013). *P. rufescens* has been known to breed in Uganda as early as 1939, with official records made in subsequent years (Din & Eltringham 1973, Pomeroy 2002, Nachuha 2007, Nachuha & John 2012). Breeding, particularly in eastern Uganda, starts in March when the main rains begin and ends in July. For the past seven years, *P. rufescens* has bred at mixed colony sites in eastern Uganda. In 2005 breeding was recorded at three sites, namely North-Road Primary School in Mbale town, Busolwe Hospital grounds and Mbale railway quarters, whose exact locations are shown in Table 1. The presence of Mvule trees *Milicia exclesa* at these sites seemed to be one of the attractions (see also Nachuha & Quinn 2012 and Fig. 1). Three years later *P. rufescens* was no longer breeding at either Busolwe Hospital or Mbale railway quarters because the nesting trees had been cut down, presumably causing a local migration of the birds to other unknown locations.

Figure 1. An Adult and young of *Pelecanus rufescens* on *Milicia exclesa* tree at North-Road Primary School. Picture taken on 9 June 2013 at 09:30.

Table 1. Breeding colonies at which numbers of nests of *Pelecanus rufescens* were recorded.

Breeding site	Lat/Long	Year						
		2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Busolwe Hospital grounds	0°50'N, 33°57'E	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Butaleja district Headquarters	0°55'N, 33°56'E	0	0	0	0	0	6	4
North-Road Primary School	1°4'N, 34°10' E	182	137	137	120	85	90	127
Mbale railway quarters	1°4'N, 34°10' E	30	0	0	0	12	0	0

Results in Table 1 show site fidelity of *P.rufescens* to the main breeding colony at North-Road Primary School, where numbers have fluctuated over the years. This colony also supported other species such as Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopica*, Yellow-billed Stork *Mycteria ibis*, African Spoonbill *Platalea alba* and Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*. However, since 2010, these other species have left this colony, apparently for the Mbale railway quarters site about 3 km

away, where numbers have recently increased. It is difficult to guess the underlying cause of this move considering that the colony to which these birds have relocated has trees such as Jambula *Syzygium guineense* and Cassia *Cassia spectabilis* that are weak and already heavily populated with breeding birds of the same species together with Long-tailed Cormorants *Phalacrocorax africanus*. This colony is also more threatened by settlement and other human activities.

On 4 April 2011 and 23 May 2013 we observed solitary individuals and loose groups of *P. rufescens* feeding on small adult fish, mainly *Tilapia* and *Haplochromis*, at the Mbale town sewage lagoons located about 3 km away. The limited observations at the floor of the breeding colony further indicated that *P. rufescens* fed exclusively on fish (see Fig. 2), most likely obtained from these lagoons.

Figure 2. Fish remains found on the ground of the breeding colony of P. *rufescens*, at North-Road Primary school. Picture taken on 9 June 2013 at 10:15.

The North-Road Primary School colony seems to be robust because the birds nest there every year. However, its future is not assured given that it is located at a school whose management may consider expanding their infrastructure at any time and conceivably cutting down of the six *Milicia exclesa* trees. Should this happen, then *P. rufescens* could struggle to find an alternative site considering that there are hardly any *M. exclesa* trees left in eastern Uganda, and if there are any, they may not be located within quick and easy access to food.

There has been a general decline in the breeding population of *P. rufescens* over the years. This may be attributed to a combination of factors, such as loss of breeding trees and possibly the frequent storms that lead to the death of the immature birds. This decline has conservation implications for this species and others. However, our effort to monitor the breeding sites on a yearly basis enables us to build a dataset that will inform the future, and also gives us an opportunity to stress to the local people the importance of the Mvule tree to the survival of *P. rufescens* and to the environment in general. This approach could be adopted by other researchers in areas where birds face similar threats.

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Further remarks concerning the Little Egret complex in East Africa

Little Egret-like birds that occur in Africa have been the subject of debate for decades, and remain taxonomically highly controversial. Three forms in Kenya (*garzetta, schistacea* and *dimorpha*) largely behave as separate species and are generally easy to identify, but confusion remains as to whether *Egretta garzetta* in Africa is monotypic or whether it represents a polytypic species embracing some or all of the forms *dimorpha, schistacea* and *gularis*.

In Europe the Western Reef Egret (*E. gularis*) and the Little Egret (*E. garzetta*) are usually recognized as separate species (Cramp & Simmons 1977, Hancock & Elliott 1978, Payne 1979, Brown *et al.* 1982, Sibley & Monroe 1990). Two, sometimes three, subspecies have been recognized for the Western Reef Egret, all of which have a mainly coastal distribution and are dimorphic with dark and white individuals occurring in the same population, together with intermediates in variable proportions. These are: nominate *gularis* in West Africa; *schistacea* in East Africa and the Indian sub-continent, and a third form *dimorpha* in the Malagasy Region and coastal East Africa which has been variably considered as a race of either *gularis* or *garzetta* or a species, Dimorphic Egret, in its own right (Dubois & Yesou 1995).

The race *schistacea* (known earlier as *asha*), is typically a bird of the Indian sub-continent, while in Africa it occurs throughout the Persian Gulf from the southern Sinai south to the Somali and north Kenya coasts. Elsewhere an inland population extends (alongside typical Little Egrets) down the Rift Valley to Lake Turkana in northern Kenya with vagrants reported south to lakes Nakuru, Naivasha, Albert and Edward. From southern Kenya south through coastal and off-shore islands in Tanzania to the Comores and Madagascar, *schistacea* is replaced by the form *dimorpha*.

The introduction of several hundred *schistacea* from Pakistan into Germany and Austria during 1980–82 resulted in several escapees, some of which were of the dark-morph variety and subsequent sightings of dark egrets along the Mediterranean coasts may have referred to such individuals (Wust 1983, Cistac 1984).

Typical characteristics of Little Egrets (*E. garzetta sensu stricto*) and Western Reef-Egrets (*E. gularis/schistacea*) have been described which should allow ready separation in the field.

i) General overall appearance: Little Egrets are typically slimmer and more graceful. No dark morph individuals are recorded in East Africa, while in *gularis/schistacea/ dimorpha* populations a high percentage of dark morph birds are always present.

ii) Bill shape and colour: Little Egret has a long, narrow, straight, black bill compared

to *gularis/schistacea* in which birds often have a thicker yellowish bill with variable amounts of black.

iii) Loral features: Little Egrets have blue-grey lores, while those of *gularis/schistacea* are yellow.

iv) Tarsus and feet: Little Egrets have black legs and yellow feet, while *gularis/schistacea* have blackish legs with yellow extending variably from the feet and often well up the tarsus.

Dimorphic Egret (*E. dimorpha*) is polymorphic, with dark birds common. Madagascar populations are larger than Little Egret (*E. garzetta sensu stricto*) but resemble it in leg colour and in bill colour and shape. Indeed, white birds of the smaller south Kenya coast population, ascribed to this form, are doubtfully distinguishable from Little Egrets though they do tend to show more extensive yellow on the tarsus (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

Little Egrets tend to feed in small groups on wetlands, inland or near the coast, while the reef-egrets (*gularis/schistacea/dimorpha*) tend to be more solitary and are characteristically found on coastal shores. It might be reasonable to treat the two East African coastal reef-egrets (*schistacea* and *dimorpha*) as races of *E. gularis*, but the presence of *schistacea* alongside Little Egrets (*garzetta*) throughout the Rift Valley from Ethiopia south to Kenya and Uganda, and the presence of *dimorpha* throughout all inland wetlands in Madagascar complicates the issue. Also, dark individuals of *schistacea* are often paler or more greyish than either dark *gularis* or *dimorpha*, while the white wing patches that are always present in dark morph *dimorpha* and *gularis*, are generally absent in *schistacea*.

Turner (2010) outlined three possible treatments of the *E. garzetta* complex in East Africa: as three, two or just a single species. Dickinson & Remsen (2013) have since followed Payne (1979) in treating *garzetta* and *gularis* as separate species with *dimorpha* included in *garzetta*, and *schistacea* within *gularis*. Meanwhile, Safford & Hawkins (2013) have followed del Hoyo *et al.* (1992) in considering *gularis*, *schistacea* and *dimorpha* as being conspecific with *garzetta*, but agreed with Kushlan & Hancock (2005), who point out the lack of convincing evidence to resolve the taxonomy of this group, and urge for "definitive, range-wide studies using a combination of biochemical, morphological, and behavioural characteristics".

Confirmed cases of interbreeding between *schistacea* and *garzetta* are few, but studies over a period of five years at Lake Turkana, northern Kenya of the pairing and nesting of individuals that appeared to be dark phase *schistacea* with those that appeared identical with the all-white *garzetta*, led Hancock & Kushlan (1984) to the hypothesis that they are best considered the same species.

While *schistacea* are highly variable in appearance, they are relatively easy to separate from Little Egrets (*garzetta*) by the combination of characters detailed above. Many nominate *gularis* share these diagnostic characters, but others closely resemble Little Egrets, and white individuals can be very difficult to separate from them. Meanwhile in Europe, several pale grey or pied egrets with plumage resembling *gularis* or *schistacea*, but with shape and structure typical of *garzetta* have occurred in both France and Spain suggesting that mixed pairing may occasionally occur and be productive (Dubois & Yesou 1995). Elsewhere, and particularly in India and Africa, the many examples of what appear to be intermediate birds, presumably resulting from cross breeding, constitute strong arguments supporting the concept that these

populations are not different species.

In conclusion, while many issues remain unresolved, and pending molecular information to the contrary, the evidence appears to support the view that the *E. garzetta* complex is best considered for now to be a single polymorphic species. The principal characteristic of all reef-egrets, that of a thicker bill, is probably an adaptation to hard-bodied food in marine habitats.

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Shelley's Greenbul *Andropadus masukuensis* in Kimboza Forest Reserve, Tanzania

Kimboza Forest Reserve is a lowland forest (300–500 m) located in the eastern foothills of the Uluguru Mountains, Tanzania (7°00′S, 37°48′E). It is a small *c.* 386 ha (Burgess *et*

al. 2002) semi-deciduous lowland forest (Svendsen & Hansen 1995) currently invaded by an exotic species of tree *Cedrella odorata.*

Shelley's Greenbul *Andropadus masukuensis* is a very common, but generally silent bulbul found in eastern Africa from 900–2300 m (Keith *et al.* 1992). The only low altitude record of this species was at 350 m in forest edge at Mtai in the East Usambara Mountains during the cold season in July–August 1990 (Evans & Anderson 1993).

A. masukuensis has been found to be a seasonal altitudinal migrant in the Uluguru Mountains (Werema 2007a,b) and in the other Eastern Arc Mountain forests (Stuart 1983, Stuart *et al.* 1987, Stuart *et al.* 1993, Burgess & Mlingwa 2000). On 17 July 2012 while mist netting at Kimboza Forest Reserve at 300 m, I captured one individual of *A. masukuensis.* Previous records from the Uluguru Mountains indicate that this species has not been recorded at this altitude (Stuart & Jensen 1985). Because the bird was caught during the cold season, it is possible that this individual was a cold season visitor at Kimboza. The forest of the contiguous Uluguru Nature Reserve is at a higher altitude and is separated from the Kimboza Forest Reserve by 12–15 km of farmland matrix. The record of this species at Kimboza Forest Reserve indicates that it may have the potential to cross large forest gaps to reach the low altitude forests.

Though the importance of Kimboza Forest Reserve as a cold season refuge for seasonal altitudinal migrants has been documented by several ornithologists (Stuart & Jensen 1985, Svendsen & Hansen 1995, Werema 2007a,b), it is my impression that further studies will help to improve its recognition as a forest of considerable conservation value to birds. It is possible that more species that make seasonal altitudinal movements are using Kimboza Forest Reserve as a cold season habitat. The reserve is currently under threat from logging and fire. The latter threat is causing the spread of the exotic tree *C. odorata* (C. Werema pers. obs).

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A record of Black-shouldered Nightjar *Caprimulgus nigriscapularis* in Tanzania

Recent opinion has varied as to the taxonomic rank that should be given to the Black-shouldered Nightjar *Caprimulgus (pectoralis) nigriscapularis*. It is recognized as a full species by, for example, Fry & Hargreaves 1988, Cleere 1998, Dickinson 2003 and Carswell *et al.* 2005, but is considered by others, for example Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1993, Zimmerman *et al.* 1996, and Dickinson & Remsen 2013, as best retained as a race of *C. pectoralis*. It is treated as a full species by the Tanzania Bird Atlas and is discussed as such here.

On the night of 9 February 2012 a nightjar was heard calling and recorded in an area of regenerating forest and grassland roughly 5 km south of Minziro town (1°02′ S, 31°32′ E). Based on the location of the observation, close to the Uganda border, this bird was deemed likely to be *C. nigriscapularis* rather than the race *shelleyi* of Fiery-necked Nightjar *C. pectoralis* which occurs further south in western Tanzania. Recordings on Xenocanto of *C. nigriscapularis* from Ghana seemed to further confirm this identity. However, because the calls of these taxa are so similar, the recording was forwarded to David Moyer for an expert opinion. The call was enhanced, and calls of *C. pectoralis* from Mahale National Park in western Tanzania and of *C. nigriscapularis* from Senegal (C. Chappuis) were spliced in for comparison. Moyer considered that the Minziro bird "is most probably *nigriscapularis*". The recordings were sent to Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire who also suggested that the Minziro bird was most likely *nigriscapularis*, stating that "the first part of the (Minziro bird) song is rather flat as in *nigriscapularis*, it does not have the dip in frequency of *pectoralis*."

This record appears to represent an extension of *nigriscapularis* from nearby south-west Uganda, and is the best evidence for its occurrence in Tanzania. Stevenson & Fanshawe (2003) show its range to include north-west Tanzania, and BirdLife International (2012) includes the Kigoma area of western Tanzania within the "probable range" but seemingly with little or no empirical evidence. The Tanzania Bird Atlas has no confirmed records for *C. nigriscapularis*, although a single report from Rumanyika Game Reserve by M. Baker is assumed to refer to this species. This appears to be the first confirmation of its occurrence in Tanzania.

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The genus *Phoeniculus* in eastern and north-eastern Africa, with remarks concerning the *Phoeniculus purpureus* superspecies

The genus *Phoeniculus* Jarocki 1821 currently comprises five species, all confined to sub-Saharan Africa (Fry 1988). Two (*castaneiceps* and *bollei*) are forest specialists, while the remaining three (*purpureus, damarensis* and *somaliensis*) make up a superspecies of wooded savanna species, and form the basis of this note.

Traditionally wood-hoopoes and scimitarbills have comprised the Afrotropical family Phoeniculidae Bonaparte 1831. Peters (1945) recognized two genera (*Phoeniculus* and *Rhinopomastus*) while White (1965) placed all in *Phoeniculus*. The single genus arrangement (*Phoeniculus*) was also preferred by Davidson (1976) and Fry (1988), while Sibley & Ahlquist (1985) recommended separate family status for wood-hoopoes (*Phoeniculidae*) and scimitarbills (*Rhinopomastidae*).

Within the genus *Phoeniculus*, the *P. purpureus* superspecies, occurring in all

savanna regions of Africa, has been the subject of much debate. The forms *damarensis, granti* and *somaliensis* appear very closely related to *purpureus,* but all have been variably treated as either separate species or sub-species, and much needed DNA sequencing data remains scant. With several forms described, those occurring in eastern and north-eastern Africa are:

Phoeniculus purpureus (Green Wood-hoopoe) including *niloticus and marwitzi*
Phoeniculus damarensis / granti (Violet Wood-hoopoe)
Phoeniculus somaliensis (Black-billed Wood-hoopoe) including *abyssinicus and neglectus*

In Green Wood-hoopoes the degree of divergence between Namibian birds and Kenyan *P. purpureus marwitzi* is low, and in all wood-hoopoes the degree of phenotypic divergence among currently recognized taxa is poorly characterized, while mantle plumage varies among individual wood-hoopoes and between age classes (Cooper *et al.* 2001). At the same time there appear to be no discernible vocal differences between the three forms of the *P. purpureus* superspecies.

In Kenya *P. purpureus marwitzi* is largely blackish, glossed with green on the head, upperparts and breast, while *P.p. niloticus* has the head, mantle, breast and tail appearing more steel-blue than green, thus appearing very similar to the Violet Wood-hoopoe of eastern Kenya. The continuum between green and purple is well known to all who study iridescent plumage, with the colours shifting from one to the other as the light source and angle vary, and so plumage colours in *purpureus* may appear to change from greenish to blue to violet to almost blue-black depending on whether the bird is seen in bright sunlight, deep shade or dappled light, often leading to identification difficulties in several areas. There can also be apparent differences in colour between early morning and late afternoon viewing conditions. While recently examining specimens in the BMNH collection at Tring, I was impressed at how much the varying colours would change depending on whether viewed in sunlight or under artificial light conditions.

The Black-billed Wood-hoopoe *P. somaliensis,* long considered a race of the Green Wood-hoopoe, was deemed worthy of separate species status by Davidson (1976) on the grounds that the largely all-black bill is typically more slender and decurved than in either *purpureus* or *damarensis,* and indeed that the longer bill does serve to distinguish it from the other two.

While some authors consider the Violet Wood-hoopoe *P. damarensis* a Southern African endemic, others believe that it might simply be a plumage variant and junior synonym of *P. purpureus* (Cooper *et al. op. cit.*). The form *granti* (treated as a full species by White 1965) is endemic to the palm-fringed river systems of eastern Kenya, with as yet no known cases of intergrades with *purpureus.* Elsewhere however, birds reported as *granti* may be nothing more than individual *purpureus* with distinctive violet tail and mantle feathering appearing more prominent depending on light conditions at the time. Adult *granti* have varying densities of green-glossed feathers and juveniles cannot safely be distinguished from juvenile *purpureus.* On the other hand any observed differences in plumage colour between Green and Violet Wood-hoopoes may well be clinal or habitat-related, with possibly a more pronounced violet colouration occurring in birds in arid areas.

Ash & Atkins (2009) omitted the Violet Wood Hoopoe from south-west Ethiopia on the grounds that Neumann did not after all collect it there. Peters (1945) did however include the Omo Valley and lakes Rudolf and Stephanie within the

range of *P. purpureus granti*. Two early specimens collected by Zaphiro at 4150 ft (1263 m) along the Zoula River (a tributary of the Omo) in July 1905 (Ogilvie-Grant 1913) were originally named *somaliensis*, but recent close examination at Tring showed both birds to be short-billed, and so to belong to *purpureus* or *granti*. Meanwhile, in Somalia, there are no "typical" *granti*-type birds along the Juba or Shabeelle river valleys in the south where one might expect them (Ash & Miskell 1998 reported only *somaliensis* there). That then leaves *granti* as a largely Kenya endemic, but there also remains the question as to whether *granti* is a race of *damarensis* or *purpureus*. On simply zoogeographical grounds it would make more sense to treat *granti* and *damarensis* as belonging to separate species, but bearing in mind the reservations expressed by Cooper *et al.*, our eastern and northeastern birds are all the more in need of further study.

While Cooper *et al.* may not have presented a clear case for treating *damarensis* as simply a plumage variant of *purpureus*, they have identified issues that need to be addressed more fully. Further study of vocalizations together with additional molecular work that includes representatives of *niloticus, neglectus, abyssinicus, somaliensis, marwitzi* and *granti* would seem necessary to clarify relationships and species limits within this complex group of wood-hoopoes.

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Preliminary checklists for two Important Bird Areas of Ethiopia: Sof Omar and Shek Husein in the Bale eco-region

Ethiopia harbours 837 bird species, 18 of which are endemic and a further 14 near endemic (shared with Eritrea) (Ash & Atkins 2009). To promote the conservation of these birds and their habitats, 69 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) were identified for Ethiopia (Fishpool & Evans 2001). These important areas were selected based on the following criteria: the presence of globally threatened birds (red data species; criterion A1), the presence of range-restricted species (whose distribution occurs within 5000 km^2; criterion A2), the presence of species characteristic of specific biomes (criterion A3) and lastly, the presence of congregations (criterion A4) (Fishpool & Evans 2001). In many of these IBAs however, there is a distinct lack of adequate knowledge of avifauna assemblages and their significance (EWNHS 1996). Sof Omar and Shek Husein are two of these IBAs.

Sof Omar (6°54′ N, 40°47′ E; 1150–1450 m) and Shek Husein (7°50′ N, 40°35 E; *c.* 1200 m) are situated in the Bale Zone of the Oromia Regional National State, in the south-eastern semi-arid lowlands of Ethiopia. Sof Omar is dominated by *Commiphora-Kirkia-Acacia* woodland and bushland and Shek Husein by mixed *acacia* and deciduous woodland. Both sites are significant places of worship which attract pilgrims from all over the country and are increasingly popular with tourists. Security problems and relative inaccessibility has meant that these areas, especially Shek Husein, were rarely visited in the past by birders, even in 1996 when the IBAs were being identified (EWNHS 1996). Both sites were selected as IBAs based on criterion A1 with Sof Omar also meeting criterion A3. It is only now, more than a decade later, that these sites have begun to be visited for their birding interest (Ash & Atkins 2009, Behrens *et al.* 2010, Spottiswoode *et al.* 2010)

In July 2007 and October 2008 AA visited both sites. Birds were recorded from a slow-moving vehicle while travelling from Robe town to Sof Omar caves and on a return trip from Ginir town to Shek Husein. Active bird searching was also conducted in the valley area of Sof Omar from the Cave's entrance to exit, and in and around the village of Shek Husein, for two to four hours each during both visits. All observations started and ended in the site specific characteristic habitats.

Appendix 1 provides an updated species list for both sites. Previous reports gave 65 species for Sof Omar (EWNHS 1996; Ash & Atkins 2009; Behrens *et al.* 2010; Spottiswood *et al.* 2010) and 48 for Shek Husein (EWNHS 1996, Ash & Atkins 2009). Of these, we were able to list 35 of the Sof Omar species and 14 from Shek Husein. We also added 12 new species for Sof Omar and 15 for Shek Husein.

In Sof Omar, newly documented species included the near threatened Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* and Eurasian Roller *Coracias garrulus*. In addition we found three species of which there are few Ethiopian records: Scarce Swift *Schoutedenapus myoptilus* (which belongs to the Afrotropical Highlands biome), White-headed Mousebird *Colius leucocephalus* and Blue-capped Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus*. In July 2007, nine Scarce Swifts were observed flying over the vegetation covering the escarpment of Sof Omar Cave. They were more slender than other swifts, and darker than African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* with slightly paler throat. Ash & Atkins (2009) gave only five previous Ethiopian records, the last being in 1990. Although

White-headed Mousebird is common in Somalia, the only published record from Ethiopia concerns a 1973 sighting on the Somali border, also (as for our observation) in an area where the Speckled Mousebird *C. striatus* occurs (Ash &Atkins 2009). There are only two previous Ethiopian reports of Blue-capped Cordon-bleu, also near the Somali border, the last of these in 1973. We now have 70 species listed for Sof Omar, including 26 belonging to the Somali-Masai Biome and two to the Afrotropical Highlands biome. Three species reported for Ethiopia for just the sixth, third and second time respectively, two are near threatened and one is an Ethiopian endemic.

Newly reported species for Shek Husein include the vulnerable White-headed Vulture *Trignoceps occipitalis* and again the elusive White-headed Mousebird. This brings the total number of species documented to 56, including 21 species belonging to the Somalia-Masai Biome, one endemic, one endangered, one vulnerable and one near threatened species.

It is clear, given the diversity, rarity and the number of globally important species occurring, that both sites are correctly considered IBAs and have potential as popular Ethiopian avitourism sites. It is also clear that further visits are required at other times of year to obtain comprehensive species checklists. Serious consideration should be given to conservation of these areas given the high levels of human use. The tentative nomination of Shek Husein for World Heritage Site listing is a major step forward.

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Appendix 1. Provisional revised checklists for Sof Omar and Shek Husein.

	Sof Omar		Shek Husein	
	Present record	Past record	Present record	Past record
Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*		x		
Black Kite *Milvus migrans aegyptius*	x	x	x	x
Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*			x	x
Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*			x	x
Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*	x	x	x	x
White-headed Vulture[b] *Trignoceps occipitallis*				x
African White-backed Vulture[c] *Gyps africanus*			x	x
Pallid Harrier*[c] *Circus macrourus*		x		
African Harrier Hawk *Polyboroides typus*	x	x	x	
Eastern Chanting Goshawk† *Melierax poliopterus*	x		x	
Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur*	x	x	x	
Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*	x			x
Crested Francolin *Francolinus sephaena*	x	x		
Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori*	x	x		
Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea*	x			x
Red-eyed Dove *Streptopelia semitorquata*	x	x	x	x
Ring-necked Dove *S. capicola*	x	x	x	
Laughing Dove *S. senegalensis*	x	x	x	x
Blue-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur afer*		x		
African Orange-bellied Parrot† *Poicephalus rufiventris*	x		x	
White-bellied Go-away-bird† *Corythaixoides leucogaster*	x	x	x	x
Scarce Swift‡ *Schoutedenapus myoptilus*		x		
Speckled Mousebird *Colius striatus*	x	x	x	
White-headed Mousebird† *C. leucocephalus*		x		x
Narina Trogon *Apaloderma narina*	x		x	
Eurasian Hoopoe* *Upupa epops*		x	x	
Black-billed Wood-hoopoe† *Phoeniculus somaliensis*	x	x	x	
Abyssinian Scimitarbill† *Rhinopomastus minor*	x		x	
Eurasian Roller*[c] *Coracias garrulus*		x		
Northern Red-billed Hornbill *Tockus erythrorhynchus*	x	x	x	
Hemprich's Hornbill *T.hemprichii*	x	x		
Von der Decken's Hornbill† *T. deckeni*	x		x	
Black-throated Barbet† *Tricholaema melanocephala*	x	x		
Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*	x			x
Mountain Wagtail *Motacilla clara*	x	x	x	
Fork-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus adsimilis*	x		x	x
Brown-tailed Rock-Chat† *Cercomela scotocerca*	x		x	
Dwarf Raven† *Corvus edithae*				x
Northern Grey Tit† *Parus thruppi*	x			
White-rumped Babbler† *Turdoides leucopygius*	x	x	x	
Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*	x	x	x	x
Northern Brownbul *Phyllstrephus strepitans*	x		x	
White-winged Cliff-chat‡ *Thamnolaea semirufa*		x		

	Sof Omar		Shek Husein	
	Present record	Past record	Present record	Past record
Pygmy Batis† *Batis perko*	x			
Grey-headed Batis *B. orientalis*	x		x	
Boran Cisticola† *Cisticola bodessa*			x	
Somali Long-billed Crombec† *Sylvietta isabellina*	x	x		
Grey-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura*	x	x	x	
Grey Wren-Warbler† *Calamonastes simple*	x	x	x	
Little Rock Thursh *Monticola rufocinereus*	x		x	
African Grey Flycatcher† *Bradornis microrhynchus*	x	x	x	
Northern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis edolioides*	x	x		
Lead coloured Flycatcher† *Myioparus plumbeus*	x			
Common Fiscal *Lanius collaris*		x	x	
Red-napped Bush-shrike† *Laniarius ruficeps*	x			x
Rosy-patched Bush-Shrike† *Rhodophoneus cruentus*	x		x	
Black-crowned Tchagra *Tchagra senegalus*	x			x
Three-streaked Tchagra† *T. jamesi*	x		x	x
Grey-headed Bush-shrike *Malaconotus blanchoti*	x	x		
Abyssinian white-eye† *Zosterops abyssinicus*	x		x	
Greater Blue-eared Starling *Lamprotornis chalybaeus*	x	x	x	x
Superb Starling *L. superbus*	x	x	x	
Fischer's Starling† *L.. fischeri*	x			
Shelley's Starling *L. shelleyi*	x		x	
Golden-breasted Starling *L. regius*	x			
Bristle-crowned Starling† *Onychognathus salvadori*	x	x	x	
Collared Sunbird *Hedydipna collaris*	x			
Hunter's Sunbird† *Chalcomitra hunter*	x			
Shining Sunbird† *Nectarinia habessinica*	x	x	x	x
Grey-headed Sparrow† *Passer griseus gongonensis*	x	x		x
White-headed Buffalo-weaver† *Dinemellia dinemelli*	x	x		
White-browed Sparrow-weaver *Plocepasser mahali*				x
Speke's Weaver† *Ploceus spekei*	x	x		x
Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea*				x
Northern Red Bishop *Euplectes franciscanus*		x		x
Red-collared Widowbird *E. ardens*	x	x	x	x
Black-and-White Mannikin *Spermestes bicolor*		x		
Purple Grenadier† *Uraeginthus ianthinogaster*	x		x	
Crimson-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda rhodopya*	x			
Red-checked Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus bengalus*	x	x	x	
Blue-capped Cordon-bleu† *U. cyanocephalus*				x
Village Indigobird *Vidua chalybeate*		x		x
Eastern Paradise Whydah *Vidua paradisaea*	x		x	
Straw-tailed Whydah† *V. fischeri*	x	x	x	
Salvadori's Seed-eater[bt] *Serinus xantholaemus*	x	x	x	
Somali Bunting *Emberiza poliopleura*	x		x	
Total	65	47	48	29

* = Palaearctic migrant; a = Endangered; b = Vulnerable; c = Near-threatened; † = Somali-Masai biome; ‡ =Afrotropical Highlands Biome

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* at Lutembe Bay, Uganda

Lutembe bay is a sheltered shallow bay on the northern shores of Lake Victoria near Entebbe International Airport with scattered mud islands often covered by water hyacinth. It has many Palaearctic migrants, particularly huge congregations of gulls and terns. Interesting species such as Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*, Hottentot Teal *Anas hottentota*, Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* and Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* have been found as vagrant visitors by diligently searching the masses of terns, ducks and waders.

On the late afternoon of 8 December 2010 I observed a *Calidris* wader which recalled a Red Knot *C. canuta*, a species with which I am familiar in the UK. I informed my teammate Henry Seguya and we managed to get our boatman to paddle us a bit closer. The bird appeared to be an adult in non-breeding plumage and its general size and dark spotting on the breast sides led me to think that it might be a Great Knot *C. tenuirostris*. Unfortunately it became nervous and flew to another island and we were unable to pursue it before darkness fell. I was, however, able to take some record shots. I circulated the best of four poor photographs to a few birding colleagues for their opinion, and the general consensus favoured Red Knot rather than Great Knot.

I returned to Lutembe on the 20 December 2010, together with Achilles Byaruhanga and Michael Opigi and after some three hours of searching the bird was located on a muddy island in a group of other waders: Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa*, Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax*, Little stints *Calidris minuta*, Black-winged Stilts *Himantopus himantopus* and Curlew sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea*. Good photographs were captured by Achilles which showed clearly that the bird was a Great Knot.

Among several comments on the new photograph, the following is a quote from Dick Forsman, "This image clearly shows that the bird is a Great Knot, not a Red Knot as has been suggested. The proportions..... suggest Great Knot, with a big body and a comparatively small head, a rather long and slightly decurved bill (longer than Red Knot), which is rather deep at the base but tapers clearly towards the tip. The most striking plumage feature is the spotted side of the breast, which is typical for Great Knot compared to Red. The facial pattern also differs. In Great Knot the pale supercilium is broken in front of the eye by the dark loral marking and does not reach the base of the bill, while in Red Knot the supercilium is brighter and reaches the bill, and the dark loral stripe is more clearly defined."

This constitutes the first record of Great Knot for Uganda and East Africa. There are a few recent records from southern Africa: from South Africa where a bird returned to Langebaan Lagoon in four successive winters 2000–2003 (Cohen & Winter 2003), from Mozambique in December 2004 and (3 birds) September 2008, and from Namibia in November 2008 (Engels 2009).

Acknowledgement

Special thanks go to Achilles Byaruhanga whose photograph is shown here.

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White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis* in Tanzania

There is only one documented record of the White-throated Swallow for East Africa. Britton (1980) lists the species on the basis of "a male collected over the open waters of Lake Jipe, NE Tanzania, on 25 July 1957". There have now been further reports from Tanzania. Two records have been accepted by the East African Rarities Committee as the second and third for Tanzania:

> A bird photographed by NEB at the Kapunga rice scheme on the southern edge of the Usangu Flats (approx. 8°40′ S, 34°05′ E) on 10 July 1995. It was feeding along the concrete irrigation channels and perching on emergent rushes.
>
> Six birds found by David Moyer at Ihefu Swamp on the eastern Usangu Flats (8°21′ S, 34°32′ E, 1016 m) on 22 September 1997, one of which was photographed.

More recently, on 20 August 2004, NEB & EMB watched at least 11 birds in three groups along a short stretch of the Manonga River, upstream from Lake Kitangire at 4°04′ S, 34°14′ E in the Eyasi Basin. They were perching on fish traps and feeding over the slow-moving river. Then on 31 July 2006 John Whittle and Paul Oliver watched a single bird on the Mara River, in Serengeti NP west of Kogatende Ranger Post. JW was familiar with this species from many visits to South Africa.

These new records probably reflect an increase in observer effort rather than any significant extension of the non-breeding range, but the latter cannot be ruled out. The dates suggest northward post-breeding movement as would be expected for this southern African breeding species. In Zambia it is a locally common intra-African migrant and non-breeding visitor from March to mid December, with far fewer records in northern than in central areas (Dowsett *et al.* 2008).

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Received 21 December 2011

Erratum

A yellow '*Hippolais*' warbler trapped at Ngulia re-identified as Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *Iduna pallida*

On 19 November 1995 a yellow '*Hippolais*' warbler was trapped at Ngulia Lodge. Its wing length of 70.5 mm was short for an Icterine Warbler *H. icterina* and a rather rounded wingtip clearly excluded that species. The second primary (counting ascendantly) was close in length to the sixth, the first primary was much longer than the primary coverts, and the third to fifth primaries were emarginated. These wing and other measurements were all within the range of Melodious Warbler *H. polyglotta*. They also fitted well for Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *H. pallida* (now *Iduna pallida*), but this was discounted because of the yellow washed underparts and strong olive tone to the upperparts. A small blood sample was preserved and its *cyt b* was analysed in the laboratory of Dr Andreas Helbig at Greifswald, Germany. Word was subsequently received that the bird was *H. polyglotta*, and the record was detailed in *Scopus* 20: 43–45 as a first for East Africa. Following the untimely death of Dr Helbig in 2005 a listing from his laboratory indicated that the Ngulia sample had come not from *H. polyglotta* but from *I. pallida*. Melodious Warbler was therefore omitted from the fourth edition of the *Checklist of the birds of Kenya* (2009) Nairobi: Bird Committee EANHS, with an explanation on p. 41. The blood sample was retrieved and has now been kindly reanalysed in the Heidelberg laboratory of Dr Michael Wink. Its mitochondrial *cyt b* gene has been confirmed as matching that of *I. pallida*. The bird could conceivably have been a hybrid with an *I. pallida* mother, but was more likely just a most unusual yellow variant of Eastern Olivaceous Warbler *I. pallida elaeica*. Melodious Warbler must be removed from the East African list.

David Pearson

East African Rarities Committee Report 2010–2013

The East African Rarities Committee assesses records of new and very rare birds occurring in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. This responsibility also includes assessing up to the fifth record of any species from each of the *five* countries. Therefore if you see a species for which there are fewer than five records in the country please submit full details to the EARC Secretary: Nigel Hunter, P.O. Box 24803, Karen 00502, Nairobi, Kenya; Email: nigelhunter@timbale.org

Please contact the Secretary if you are unsure whether your record requires a submission and for guidance on details to include in your submission. Past records of rare species are also sought in order to bring our database up to date. Since the Committee's last report in 2009 (*Scopus* 29: 23–26) the following records have been accepted:

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*
First record for Kenya: Lake Baringo, 22 December 1994 (Brian Finch)

Humblot's Heron *Ardea humbloti*
First record for Tanzania and mainland Africa: adult present in the Selous GR 2007 (photographs from Pietro Luraschi and Mark Sheridan Johnson)

Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus gallicus*
First record for Tanzania: juvenile Arusha NP, 1 December 2010 (Tobie Muller, Niall Perrins and Valery Schollaert)

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*
Third record for Tanzania: first winter female Kilimanjaro, 18 January 2011 (Stefan Ferger)

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga*
First record for Uganda: Murchison Falls NP, 15 December 2009 (Dick Forsman)

Cassin's Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus africanus*
Third record for Kenya: juvenile Imenti Forest, Meru, 28 February 2013 (Darcy Ogada, Shiv Kapila, Peter Wairasho and Ben Mugambi). This is a second record from the Imenti Forest (see *Scopus* 29: 23 for details of the 2006 record)

Corncrake *Crex crex*
Adult 4 km east of Kajansi, near Kampala, 4 December 2003 (William Dunlop). This is the first record for Uganda since 1950

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*
First record for Uganda: group of six birds in Queen Elizabeth NP, 15 February 2007 (Allan Kirby). For full details see Kirby (2008)

Forbes's Plover *Charadrius forbesi*
Fifth record for Uganda: Lake Nabugabo, 29 June 2011 (Roger Skeen)

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*
Second record for Uganda: Entebbe, 4 December 2010 (Roger Skeen)

Great Knot ***Calidris tenuirostris***

First record for Uganda and the East African region: Lutembe Bay, near Entebbe, 8 December 2010 (Roger Skeen)

Pectoral Sandpiper ***Calidris melanotos***

Third record for Kenya: Nairobi NP, 7 April 2002 (Brian Finch). Fourth record for Kenya: Sabaki Estuary, 21 July 2011 (Ed Harper). First record for Tanzania: Ngorongoro Crater Lake, 14 March 2005. For details see Aeberhard (2013)

White-eyed Gull ***Larus leucophthalmus***

First records for Kenya: Lake Turkana, 18–21 December 1983 and 23–24 February 1985 (photographs from Barry Taylor). First record for Uganda: Lutembe Bay, near Entebbe, 22 November 2002 (Chris Sharpe and Malcolm Wilson)

Franklin's Gull ***Larus pipixcan***

First record for Uganda and the East African region: Murchison Falls NP, June 2011 (photograph from Jonathan Rossouw)

Slender-billed Gull ***Chroicocephalus genei***

First, second, third and fourth records for Tanzania: seven at Speke Bay, Lake Victoria, 28 February 2010; three Lake Manyara, 20–25 September 2010; two Lake Natron, 30 September 2010; and one Lake Eyasi 20 February 2012. For full details see Baker *et al.* (2013)

Arctic Tern ***Sterna paradisaea***

First record for Kenya: Sabaki Estuary, 6 July 2002 (Jan Bisschop). See also Bisschop (2002)

Black Tern ***Chlidonias niger***

First record for Uganda: Queen Elizabeth NP, 8 December 2009 (Dick Forsman). Fourth record for Kenya: Lake Baringo, 18 April 2011 (Brian Finch)

Forbes-Watson's Swift ***Apus berliozi***

First record for Tanzania: large flock near Dar es Salaam, 25 March 1996 (Brian Finch)

Racquet-tailed Roller ***Coracias spatulatus***

First record for Kenya: Mara GR, 14 August 2011 (video and photograph supplied by Itai Shanni)

Shining Blue Kingfisher ***Alcedo quadribrachys***

First record for Tanzania: Minziro Forest, 15 July 1987 (photographs by Neil & Liz Baker)

Black-throated Barbet ***Tricholaema melanocephala***

Second record for Uganda: Kidepo Valley NP, 17 January 2010 (Roger Skeen)

Eurasian Wryneck ***Jynx torquilla***

First record for Tanzania: Arusha NP, 11 January 2010 (photograph from Adam Scott Kennedy)

Yellow-crested Woodpecker ***Dendropicos xantholophus***

First record for Tanzania: Minziro Forest, 24 July 2000, with subsequent records during August and September 2000, and August 2006 (Neil & Liz Baker)

Coastal Black Boubou *Laniarius nigerrimus*
First Kenya records from Manda Island for nearly a century (Brian Finch and Nigel Hunter). For full details see Turner *et al.* (2011, 2013)

Yellow Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus parvulus*
First documented record for Uganda: near Rhino Camp, West Nile District, 11 June 2009 (Guillaume Passavy)

White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis*
Second record for Tanzania: six birds at Ihefu Swamp, Usangu Flats, southern Tanzania, 22 Sept 1997 (David Moyer). See also Moyer (1999)

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica rufula*
First record of the Palaearctic race for Kenya: Ngulia Lodge, Tsavo West NP, 18 December 2009 (David Pearson). Second record for Kenya: Ngong Hills, 20 April 2013 (Brian Finch *et al.*)

Greated Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*
Second record for Kenya: Solio Plains, Naro Moru, 28 November 2003 (Brian Finch). Third record for Kenya: Watamu, 5 November 2009 (Colin Jackson)

Boran Cisticola *Cisticola bodessa*
First record for Uganda: Mt Moroto foothills, 10 July 2011 (Sheila Taylor)

Pale Prinia *Prinia somalica*
First record for Tanzania: Near Same, 11 December 2011 (Brian Finch)

Ansorge's Greenbul *Andropadus ansorgei*
First record for Uganda: Bwindi-Impenetrable Forest NP, 2 August 2001 (Nik Borrow). See also Borrow & Demey (2002)

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*
First record for Tanzania: Gibb's Farm, Karatu, near Ngorongoro Crater, April 2007 (Mikael Kall)

Southern Black Flycatcher *Melaenornis pammmelaina*
First record for Uganda: Lake Mburo NP, 12 February 2010 (Roger Skeen)

Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*
First record for Uganda: Queen Elizabeth NP, 10 March 2003 (photograph from Philip Palmer)

Red-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis niger*
Second record for Uganda: Kidepo Valley NP, 24-26 April 2011 (Roger Skeen)

Golden-naped Weaver *Ploceus aureonucha*
First record for Uganda and East Africa: Semliki NP, 1 August 2006 (Malcon Wilson). See Wilson *et al.* (2007)

Weyns's Weaver *Ploceus weynsi*
First record for Kenya: Sioport swamp, 25 October 2010 (photographs from Martin Odino)

Black-rumped Waxbill *Estrilda troglodytes*
First and second records for Tanzania: Speke Bay, Lake Victoria, 30 December 2012 (Elsle Rotenberg), and near Grumeti Camp, western Serengeti, 28 March 2013 (Joseph Openja)

Blue-capped Cordon-bleu *Uraeginthus cyanocephalus*
First record for Uganda: Karamoja District, 4 September 2011 (Roger Skeen)

A number of records were rejected either due to misidentification or insufficient details to establish identification with certainty. These were:

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* Thika, Kenya, January 1985; Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* Nyumba ya Mungu Reservoir, Tanzania, November 2007; Little Crake *Porzana parva* Thika, Kenya, January 1983, 1984 & 1985; Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* Lake Nabugabo, Uganda, 26 August 2010; Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* Lake Turkana, Kenya, October 1984; Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* Dandora Sewage Works, Nairobi, August 1985; Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* Watamu, Kenya, August 2010; Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* MacDonald's Bay, Entebbe, Uganda, January 2010; Little Gull *Larus minutus* Queen Elizabeth NP, Uganda, October 2008, and Ngorongoro Crater, Tanzania, November 2011; Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* near Mombasa, April 1984; Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana* Watamu, Kenya, August 2010; Black-billed Wood Dove *Turtur abyssinicus* Kerio Valley, Kenya, November 1995; White-thighed Hornbill *Bycanistes albotibialis* Minziro Forest, Tanzania, May 2010; Yellow Penduline Tit *Anthoscopus parvulus* near Moroto, Uganda, January 2012; White-throated Swallow *Hirundo albigularis* in Tanzania at Kilombero Valley, July 2000; Eastern Bearded Greenbul *Criniger chloronotus*, Semliki NP, Uganda, January 2010; Northern Masked Weaver *Ploceus taeniopterus* Lake Bunyoni, Uganda, June 2006; and Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* near Sumbawanga, Tanzania, January 2011.

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Ackowledgements

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ALEXANDER DAVID FORBES-WATSON (1935 - 2013)

Born at Wylam, Northumberland on 26 February 1935, Alec came to Kenya as a child and spent his early years at the family home, first at Kitale and later at Ruiru near Thika. He was educated at the Prince of Wales School in Nairobi, and following a short period of military service with the Kenya Regiment spent four years at the University of Cape Town. His interest in birds started as a young boy and it was during his early years that he was greatly influenced by such well known local ornithologists as Charles Belcher, Myles North, John Williams and Leslie Brown.

On his return from Cape Town in 1959, Alec joined the Kenya Game Department and for the next four years was stationed at Kapenguria and at Kilgoris, though his interest in birds took precedent over all other issues at the time. Leaving the Game Department in 1963 Alec, with the help of John Williams at the then Coryndon Museum, was engaged by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington to make a series of collections of East African birds, starting in March 1964 with four months on the island of Socotra, during which he was able to collect a hitherto unknown species of swift that was later named *Apus berliozi* Forbes-Watson's Swift. Later collections were assembled from the Cheranganis, Mt Elgon, the Kakamega and Arabuko-Sokoke forests, and it was while at the coast in January 1966 that Alec collected two further swifts over the Gedi Forest that were later named *Apus berliozi bensoni*, a new subspecies of his own Forbes-Watson's Swift from Socotra.

In 1965 Alec married Anna Kofsky daughter of Cynthia and Nat Kofsky, a well-known violinist and head of the Kenya Conservatoire of Music. Meanwhile Alec's reputation as one of Africa's finest field ornithologists was quickly spreading, and late 1966–1967 marked a major turning point in his career. Firstly he was fortunate to succeed John Williams as Head of the Ornithology Department at the National Museum of Kenya, and shortly afterwards was engaged by the Mt Nimba Research Committee to make a collection of birds from the Nimba region of northern Liberia. During his two years at Nimba (May 1967–December 1968 and January–April 1971) Alec made one of the most important collections of birds from a hitherto little known area of West Africa, including the discovery of the Nimba Flycatcher *Melaenornis annamarulae* which he described and named after his wife Anna.

During a visit to Tsavo West NP in November 1969 Alec noticed that large numbers of Palaearctic migratory birds were attracted to the floodlights of Ngulia Lodge, and so quickly alerted Daphne and Graeme Backhurst, Hazel and Peter Britton and David Pearson, all experienced ringers, to go and see for themselves the opportunity at Ngulia to ring hundreds of migrants on their southward passage. This phenomenon has now been studied in some detail, and with the Ngulia Ringing Group now in its 37th year of operation over 500 000 migrants have been ringed by both local and overseas ringers.

After his time in Liberia, Alec soon turned his attention to the birds of Madagascar and the Malagasy Region and for the next few years he and I made several visits to the Comoros, Seychelles, Madagascar, Reunion and Mauritius, and in 1976 we were able to resuscitate the Pan African Ornithological Congresses with a very successful and well-attended 4th PAOC in the Seychelles. By the time of 5th PAOC in Lilongwe, Malawi in 1980 and the 6th PAOC in Francistown, Botswana in 1985 Alec was one of only a handful of individuals fortunate to have attended all PAOC gatherings up to that time, such was his passion for Africa and its unparalleled birdlife. Later in 1993

he collaborated and co-authored with Bob Dowsett a Checklist of the birds of the Afrotropical and Malagasy regions.

With a long outstanding commitment to write up his fieldwork at Mt Nimba, Alec resigned his position at the National Museums of Kenya and in 1978 sent his Nimba collection to the British Museum in London where Peter Colston and Kai Curry-Lindahl were able to start work on the entire Mt Nimba collection. After several delays the report itself (*The birds of Mount Nimba, Liberia*) was finally published by the British Museum (Natural History) in 1986.

In 1979 Alec travelled to the United States where a long-time friend and colleague Frank Gill arranged for him to work on the Vireo Photographic Project at the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences. Alec remained in the United States for a few years before going to England in 1983, then back to the USA in 1985–86. He returned to East Africa in the late 1980s but was unable to get back into his life-long passion, though from 1990–92 he did participate in a number of bird surveys of several Uganda Forest Reserves under the auspices of the IUCN Tropical Forest Programme. However, his health was deteriorating badly and following a short stay in the Louise Decker Rest Home in Nairobi, he suffered a minor stroke and was forced to move into the Nanyuki Cottage Hospital in 2003 where, under excellent medical supervision and care, he remained until his death on 16 September 2013.

His commitment to African birds and his enthusiasm for birding was palpable at all times. He was also a talented artist and some of his many line drawings adorned the book "*Oh Quagga*" published in 1983 by Ian Parker and Alan Root. Alec was constantly the life and soul of many parties and impromptu get-togethers, so much so that he will be fondly remembered by many friends and colleagues in the United States and United Kingdom as well as in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and several other African countries as a fountain of knowledge on not just birds, but on all aspects of natural history. With no surviving next of kin, his two brothers having been killed under tragic circumstances several years earlier, Alec Forbes-Watson, an extraordinarily talented individual, will be a person long-remembered by those of us who were fortunate to know him as a true friend, mentor, and companion in so many distant parts of Africa.

Don Turner

SCOPUS

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Contributions comprise original papers, short communications (normally less than two pages in length), short notes and records, notices, and letters. Original papers and short communications should present new information that has not been published or been submitted for publication elsewhere. All manuscripts are subject to peer review. They will be assessed by at least one member of the editorial board as well as by independent referees.

Submissions must be written in English (following the *Oxford dictionary of English*, 3rd edition, ISBN 978-0-19-957112-3). When preparing your submission, please follow the conventions used in *Scopus* and refer to a recent issue (vol. 30 onwards) for guidance. Please be sure to type nothing in all capital letters other than combinations that always occur in capitals, e.g., USA. Some examples of *Scopus* house style are:

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References cited in the text: Cite multiple references in chronological order, separated by commas, e.g., Njoroge & Launay 1998, Mlingwa *et al.* 2001 [note ampersand, italicized '*et al.*', no comma between authors' names and date].

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(*continued on inside back cover*)

Give names of journals in full. For books, after author(s), year of publication and title, give town followed by the publisher. For example:

> Cordeiro, N.J. & Githiru, M. 2000. Conservation evaluation for birds of *Brachylaena* woodland and mixed dry forest in north-east Tanzania. *Bird Conservation International* 10: 47–65.
>
> Stuart, S.N., Jensen, F.P., Brøgger-Jensen, S. & Miller, R.I. 1993. The zoogeography of the montane forest avifauna of eastern Tanzania. Pp. 203–228 *in* Lovett, J.C. & Wasser, S.K. (eds) *Biogeography and ecology of the rainforests of eastern Africa.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
>
> Urban, E.K., Fry, C.H. & Keith, S. (eds) 1986. *The birds of Africa.* Vol. 2. London: Academic Press.

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Bird names, both English and scientific, should be those of a stated work. Any deviations from the work followed should be noted and the reasons given. An article or short communication should be submitted as an email attachment in Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx or .rtf). Only short items, such as letters, will be accepted in non-electronic, paper form. Illustrations, including photographs, line drawings and graphs, should be submitted initially as separate files in .jpg, .tif or .eps format. Once a paper is accepted, the editors may ask for illustrations to be submitted in another format. Authors of accepted full papers and short communications receive a PDF copy of their article gratis. Any paper copies, charged at cost, should be ordered when the submission is accepted.

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Records of rare birds from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda are assessed by the East Africa Rarities Committee. Records from other countries in the region can also be submitted for review and possible publication in *Scopus*. A full account of the record should be sent to the *Scopus* editors and to Nigel Hunter, Secretary, East Africa Rarities Committee, email: nigelhunter@timbale.org or mailed to him at P.O. Box 24803, Karen 00502, Nairobi, Kenya.

Ringing scheme of eastern Africa

This covers several countries in the area. Qualified and aspiring ringers should contact the ringing organizer, Bernard Amakobe, Ornithology Section, Zoology Department, National Museums of Kenya, P.O. Box 40658, G.P.O. 00100, Nairobi, Kenya; tel. +254 20 3742161 ext. 243; email: scopumbre05@gmail.com

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Details of most kinds of breeding activity are welcomed by the scheme and nest record cards may be obtained free of charge from the Nest Record Scheme organizer, EANHS, Nature Kenya, P.O. Box 44486, G.P.O. 00100, Nairobi, Kenya; email: office@naturekenya.org

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The BirdLife International Partnership in eastern Africa

Through its national partners, the BirdLife International Africa Partnership Secretariat in Nairobi co-ordinates bird conservation work in the region and produces several publications of interest to ornithologists.

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